Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

I smile at you sweetly, my clothing is neat
From my dear little head to my fairy-like feet;
And unless you give pennies to little Fifine,
She will drive you half mad with her gay tambourine.

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A WHITE WORLD.

From the Painting by Joseph Clarke.

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Something Wrong with the Works.
From the Painting by F. Hyde.

THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF ART.

A Budget of Good Stories About Artists and Their Pictures.

By MARCUS WOODWARD.

"ENGLISHMEN," said the witty Frenchman, "are never amusing—except in their art."

Though I suspect the Frenchman's saying was not meant kindly—either to Englishmen in general or to English artists—yet there is a certain amount of truth in it; for if, as a nation, we are dull at joke-making, our humorous art has always been of high order. Thinking only of Leech, or Du Maurier, or Phil May, or of the brilliant coterie of *Punch* artists of the present moment—Raven Hill, Townsend, Pegram, Armour, and the rest—we can afford to let the light-headed Frenchman sneer as he will, while we hold fast, in our stolid John Bull way, to the satisfying belief that there's nothing like English humour as expressed by the English art-humorists.

The average Englishman's ignorance on all matters concerning art is certainly fair game for sarcasm, as may be illustrated by a story told by an art-dealer. A client, to whom he had sent a catalogue, had given an order for a reproduction of the statue of Venus de Milo, which was duly dispatched. Now, the original Venus, of course, had both her arms broken off short ages ago. Imagine, then, the dealer's surprise on receiving an indignant letter from his client, complaining that his copy was incomplete, since the arms had been broken off in transit! This complaint so tickled the dealer's fancy that he replied, in humorous strain: "Make a claim on the railway company for damage." Which the client did—in all seriousness—and the cream of the joke is that the railway company paid!

Art dealers and artists can tell many good stories concerning humorous pictures or their morals which have been taken seriously. That clever young artist, Lionel Edwards, has

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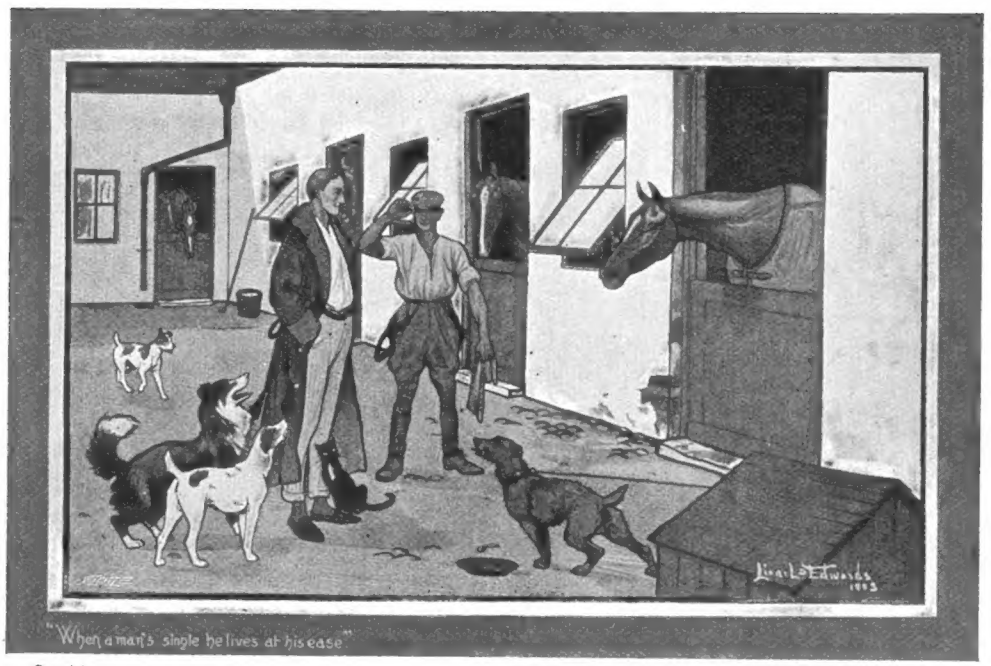

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From the Painting by Lionel Edwards.

published two pictures which illustrate the old saying:

> When a man's single he lives at his ease,
> When a man's married his troubles begin.

The first portrays a gay bachelor, surrounded by his horses and dogs, and quite in his element in the stables. The second shows the bachelor as a married man, with his wife beside him, mournfully looking on at the sale of his bloodstock. Engravings of these pictures were purchased by a newly-married man for the adornment of his study. A week later a serious-minded feminine relative came on a visit, and her indignation at the shocking moral of the pictures knew no bounds It was only appeased when the engravings were returned to the dealer. "For," she declared, "those wicked pictures are a slur on matrimony!"

Another instance concerns a picture by Mr. Frank Hyde, a delightful painter of monks. The picture is entitled "The Rival Monasteries," and shows a merry tug-of-war going forward between two bands of jovial monks. A business man in London, a wholesale shipper, was so impressed by the strenuousness of this painting, that he bought no fewer than twelve engravings of it, sending one to each of his various offices, with a polite note to all the heads of departments to this effect:

"I am making you and your colleagues a present of a fine picture, and in doing so I wish to express the desire that in future you will all try a little more to imitate the monks—that is to say: 'Pull!'"

And beneath each engraving he inscribed the legend:

"*Pull, you fellows—Pull!*"

Sometimes when artists make fun of serious subjects, they themselves suffer pains and penalties; as another well-known humorous painter, Mr. Lance Thackeray, has cause to know.

"I was making sketches," he relates, "a few years ago at the Dublin Horse Show. One of the flower stalls was presided over by a Sister of Mercy, an elderly person of comically vast proportions, wearing the usual picturesque white cap, in this case like a yacht in full sail. I made a sketch from behind, and a very funny sketch it was, too. But unluckily I was discovered, and the old lady sent along one of her girl helpers to ask if she might see my picture. I handed my sketch to the girl, and when, after a long time, she returned, it was only to stammer out that the sister had destroyed my careful work of art. I asked the girl if she knew why. "Oh," she replied, "I think it must have been *too good*"; and I believe this was the

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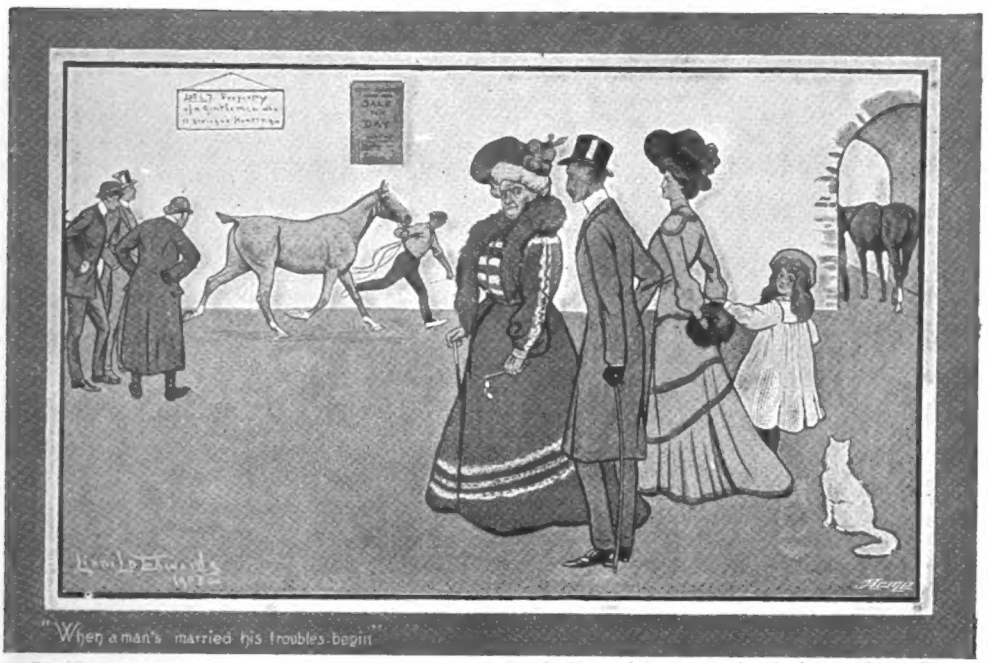

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From the Painting by Lionel Edwards.

true reason, for when I indignantly approached the old lady to demand what she meant by tearing up my sketch, she replied, with a toss of her head: "Sure, and it was not *seemly!*"

Many are the trials of artists when making sketches. It is often a harassing experience to sit before an easel in a village street; for rustic youths, who have a wit all their own, are not always respectful to sensitive feelings.

"So you are a painter?" remarked a yokel once to a well-known painter of village street-scenes.

"Yes—haven't you got eyes?" was the painter's crushing retort.

But the rustic, nothing daunted by the sarcasm, had another question ready. "*And do 'ee gild, too?*" he inquired, in the softest manner in the world.

Mr. Dendy Sadler, too, has had his experiences when painting in the open air those fine old inns that so often figure in his pictures. A jolly landlord of such an inn once stood in silence behind him for a long while as he worked; then remarking: "Pleasant pastime, sir—pleasant pastime," turned on his heel, as though painting and hard work and life-long study had nothing to do with each other.

In view of Mr. Dendy Sadler's high place in the world of art, and his far-spread fame, this, too, is a pleasant story: To his studio one day came a Parliamentary canvasser, bent on securing his vote. The canvasser talked and talked, while Mr. Sadler tried not to look bored; until at last, satisfied that he must have secured the painter's vote, the canvasser dropped the subject, and began to look round the beautiful studio. A six-foot canvas on an easel caught his attention. "Ah, Mr. Sadler," he said, "*I see you do a little painting!*"

He did not get the vote.

It is quite a common idea—at least, in the country—that painting does not spell work. Mr. George Wetherbee, who has painted many charming pictures of country life, tells how, when he haunted rural Hertfordshire in search of subjects, the local peasantry were firmly convinced that he never did such a thing as a stroke of work. One day he surprised his neighbours by taking a hand in the harvesting of a cornfield.

"Why, there's the artist working," cried the children, as though it were the most phenomenal event in the world.

Mr. John Hassall, who strides in the forefront of the humorists of to-day, once had a very funny experience when working in the open air. One day, in the north of London,

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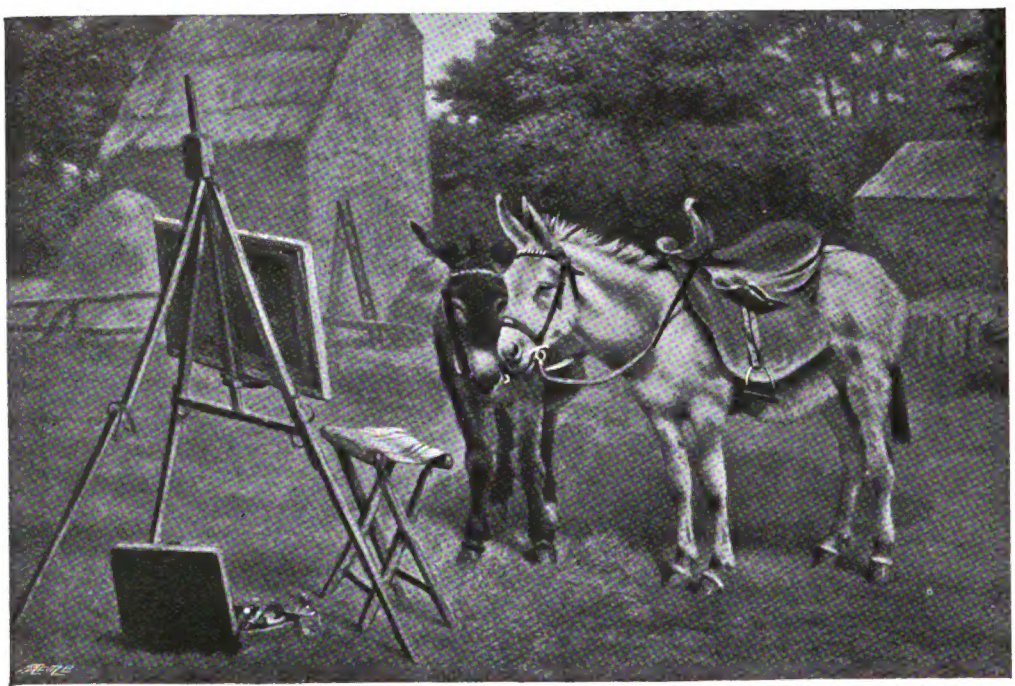

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Art Critics.

From the Painting by W. Weekes.

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Rejected.

From the Painting by W. Weekes.

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Let Sleeping Dogs Lie.

From the Painting by Stanley Berkeley,

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The Awakening.

From the Painting by Stanley Berkeley

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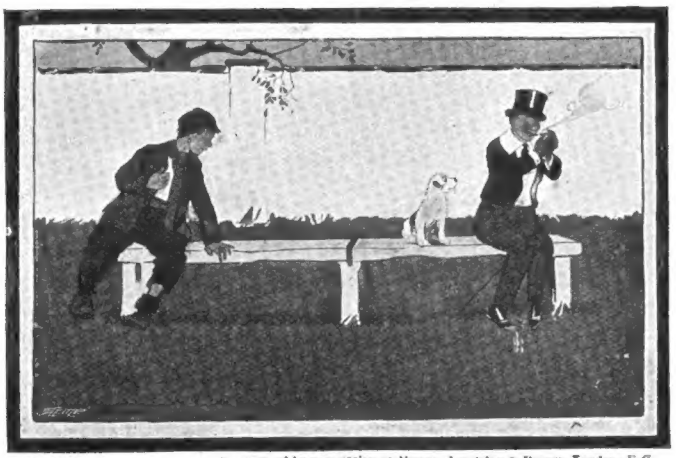

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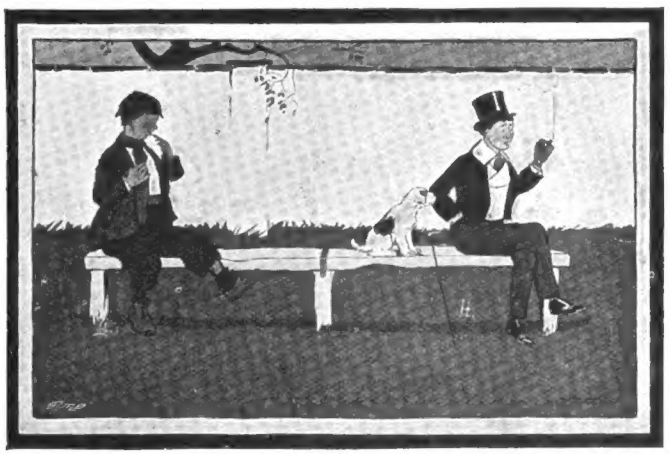
Faith.



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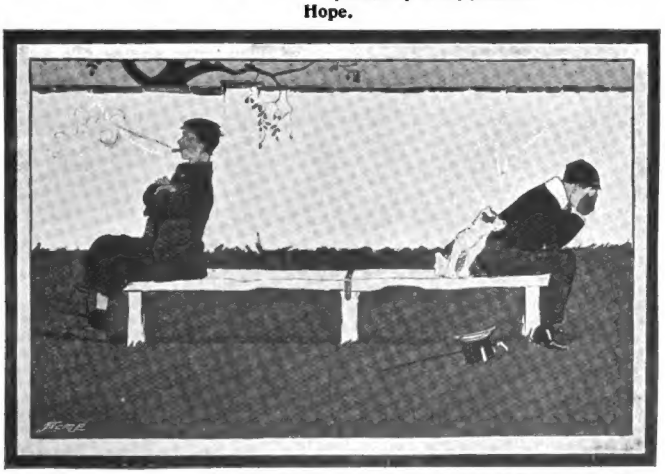
Hope.



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Charity.

From the Paintings by Lance Thackeray.

he came across a group of small boys playing hockey in the streets. They formed a picturesque rabble, and while they played, he proceeded to make a sketch of them, leaning his drawing-board against a stone wall the while.

Up came a short-sighted old lady. Seeing the artist at his work, she at once put her hand into her purse, and produced some pennies. Mr. Hassall took off his hat with a low bow, and murmured his thanks as he accepted the offering—and to this day he exhibits the coppers he received as souvenirs of the time when he was mistaken for a pavement artist.

Another good story throws a light on what the masses think about Art and is connected with a little painting entitled "Temptation," by the great animal painter, Mr. Briton Rivière. The subject is dog-stealing, and a seedy-looking individual is seen trying to win the confidence of a King Charles spaniel with a seductive bit of liver. The dog-thief was partly studied from a dealer from whom for many years Mr. Rivière obtained his dog models—a man rejoicing in no less a name than "Ravenscroft."

Said Ravenscroft one day to a client:

"They do tell me, sir, as 'ow Mr. River gets as much as two 'underd pounds for paintin' one dawg: is that true?"

Ravenscroft was assured that it was not improbable.

"Well," said he, after a thoughtful pause, "*I* don't blame 'im. If people *are* such fools, *I* don't see w'y a sharp feller shouldn't take advantage of 'em!"

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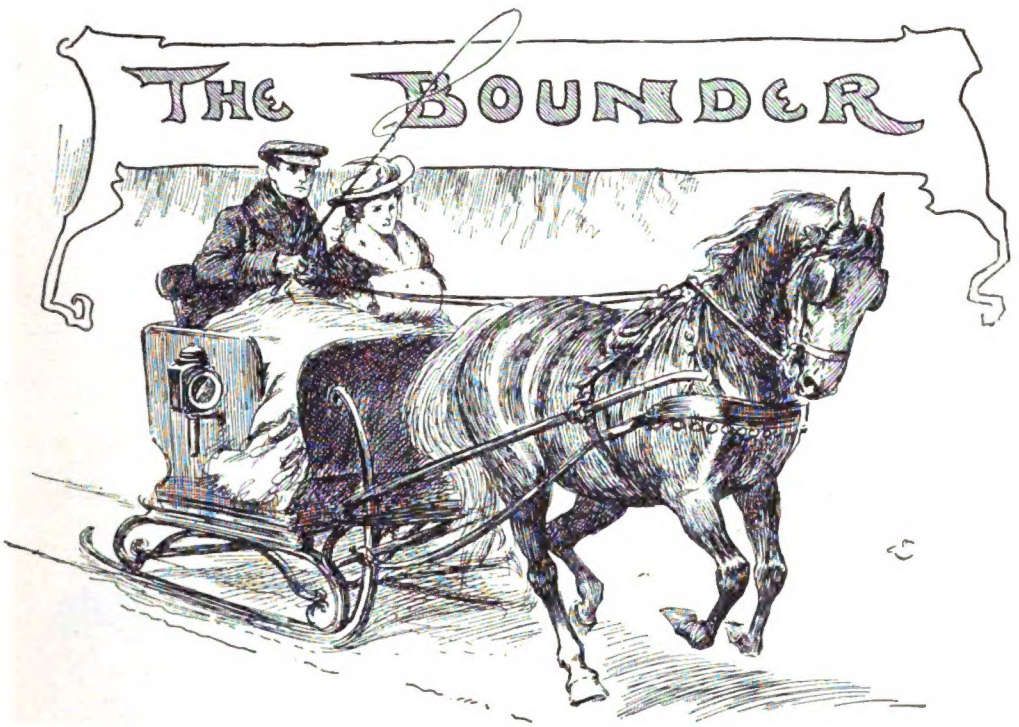

A New Year Story.

FROM THE DIARY OF LADY ETHELBERTA STRAITE, AGED SEVENTEEN, AND GENERALLY CALLED "MINX."

BY ALBERT SPENCER.

December 23rd, 1905.—I think people who keep diaries are fools, but I am not really keeping this, only writing in it. I shall tear it up afterwards.

I knew all the week that something nasty was going to happen, because father kept talking about mortgages, and the decay of the landed interest, and he was so cross after the agent called. I found out this morning what it was. We are to have a *bounder* to stay with us for Christmas.

He is a cattle-king or something of the kind, but his cattle aren't good enough for him, and he wants to get into better company. So he is coming to us to learn the ways of good society. He has made "an arrangement" with father over some shares. They don't call it paying us, but it is, and the Bounder's money will be keeping us all Christmas-time. Ugh! We shall be eating his turkey, drinking his wine, and getting kissed under his mistletoe! I have a good mind not to eat or drink or be kissed—only I have such a good appetite.

I don't blame poor old father, because he really is hard up, but the man. He must be a bounder of bounders, or he wouldn't come where he isn't wanted. I would tell him so, only mother made me promise to be civil. She was quite sympathetic about it; but father was very rude, and said it was no business of mine. I said it was, because Maude and Grace are both engaged, so people would think they were trying to catch the Bounder for me! The girls laughed, of course (they think I am nobody because I am not out), and father put up his eyeglasses, like he does when he is going to snub the Opposition or the Government (I can never remember which he is), and just stared at me.

"I have never yet planned deadly evil to any man," he said (he meant *me!*); "and remember this, Ethelberta"—he only calls me Ethelberta when he is angry—"whatever motive may induce me to receive a—er—person under my roof, while he *is* my guest, my daughters will treat him with

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courtesy, and speak of him with politeness."

So I can't call him names, even to them; but I can put it down in my diary. He *is* a bounder; and if I don't find a polite way to make him feel small my name isn't Ethelberta Margaret Rosalind Langhorne Foster Straite!

December 24th.—He has come, and I have been very polite — so polite that father frowned and mother fidgeted. He hasn't any manners at all, and actually asked mother if I was her "baby"! This is what I think of him:

when he made mistakes, we should not hesitate to correct him, and then he turned and smiled at me.

"You are still at school, I suppose," he said, "so you will be best able to correct me, Miss Minx" He had heard them call me that.

"That is a mistake," I said directly. "You ought to call me Lady Ethelberta."

You would have thought that would have put him down, but it didn't.

"Thank you, Lady Ethelberta," he said quite calmly.

Father glared at me, and so did the others.

I told him that it was *quite* wrong, and tossed my head.

He is a bounder.

He is a bounder who does not look boundery.

He is an old bounder (quite thirty).

He is a big, strong bounder. He made my hand ache when he shook hands. (I have washed it.)

He is a cool bounder.

He is a bounder who thinks a lot of himself.

He is a bounder who will not be made to feel small easily.

Evening.—He is a bounder who has no shame. He told us right out that he was a poor boy, and did not go to school, and had to pick up his education how he could. He said he was still learning, and he hoped that, I didn't care. He mispronounced two words (the Bounder, I mean), and I told him of them, too. He must have felt small, but he would not show it. He is an annoying bounder. The most annoying thing of all is that the others like him. Mother says he is "quite a superior man, considering," and father says he is "a fine fellow," and will become "a political force." The girls say he is handsome; but he isn't.

That isn't correct. He is a handsome bounder, but I don't like him. He told mother it was quite natural that I should laugh at his blunders, and he hoped she would not repress me! So kind and patronising! The bounder!

December 25th.—I have corrected him

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fifteen times to-day. He pretends that he is grateful, but, of course, he hates me really. He treats me as a child, and actually offered to give me a bicycle! I said: "Certainly not, thank you!" He looked at me very hard, and asked if his offer were a mistake. I told him that it was *quite* wrong, and tossed my head; and then he stared at me again. He is always staring at me.

"It is never *quite* wrong to wish to do a kindness, Lady Ethelberta," he said very quietly, and I felt small instead of him, because I knew he meant to be kind in his boundery way. I wish he weren't a bounder, because I fairly ache to have a bicycle.

I think, in future, I will tell him about his mistakes quietly, and not before people. He *may* have feelings.

December 26th.—I wrote out six corrections, and gave them to him after lunch, when nobody was looking. He smiled at me, and said I was "a very kind little girl." It was very impertinent of him to praise me, I consider.

The Effingtons and the Maynes drove over, and we had an impromptu dance. There were not so many fellows as girls, and they thought themselves very grown up, and didn't take much notice of me. I went out in the conservatory to sulk. The Bounder came out and asked me to dance with him. I said I wasn't dancing. Then George Effington asked me, and I danced with him. The Bounder came up to mother when I was talking to her afterwards.

"Oh, Mr. More!" she cried. "It's too bad of you to be idle when so many girls haven't partners. Poor little Minx has only had one dance this evening, and she is so fond of it."

I thought, as he was a bounder, he would give me away to mother, and I should get in a frightful row, but he didn't; only said that he was sure I should not care to dance with him, as he didn't dance very well.

"I think you dance particularly well, Mr. More," I contradicted. It was true, but I don't know why I said it.

He bowed without saying anything. He evidently didn't mean to ask me again; but mother turned away to speak to someone, and I whispered:

"I'm *so* ashamed of myself," I said—I really was! "*Do* ask me again."

He didn't ask me, but just held out his arm, and I took it.

"It's very nice of you," I said, "and I shall like to dance with you, Mr. More."

"Good little Lady Minx!" he said.

We had five dances. I expect he will always call me Lady Minx now.

December 27th.—I have only corrected him four times to-day. He is a bounder who remembers things, and never gives you a chance to tell him the same thing twice.

I am not sure that he really is a bounder in some ways. He was playing Charlie Effington a billiard match to-day, and everyone was very excited about it, because they are much the best players. Charlie was going to play with the wrong ball, but the Bounder told him, and Charlie made a 47 break, and just won. The men seemed to think a lot of that, because it was a match, they said, and Mr. More was entitled to claim the advantage of his opponent's carelessness; and they thought he was a good sportsman because he didn't. Charlie Effington asked him over there, though he is always down on bounders, and Lady Effington quite pressed him to come.

Annabel Effington is twenty-one and not engaged. She has red hair, and I think he is too good for *her*, if he *is* a bounder.

December 28th.—I went for a sleigh ride with Mr. More this morning. We all went in pairs, and there wasn't anyone else for me or for Annabel, so I thought he would ask her, but he didn't. It was lovely to go gliding along the white roads, and among the white fields, and to hear the snow swishing and crackling. He talked about Canada and places where he had been. He knows a lot and is a clever bounder—if he is a bounder. We snowballed each other when we stopped to have a rest, but he didn't throw his hardest, I could see. He told me I was pretty. I said *that* was a mistake; but he said it wasn't. I think he likes me. Fancy being liked by a bounder!

He taught me billiards in the afternoon. I hadn't had a proper chance of learning before, because I always have to give way to my elders; but they were all playing bridge. Mother came in and said I mustn't keep him long, as he preferred bridge to billiards, and she had heard him say so.

He said he hadn't had the pleasure of playing with me before, so he spoke in ignorance; and mother laughed and went out.

I thought he had behaved like a gentlemanly bounder, so I said I was tired and we would leave off. He asked me whether I was really tired, or only thought that he was. I said I thought he would rather play bridge. He declared that he wouldn't. So we went

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on. He was very patient, and held my hand down on the table till I learnt how to make a rest for the cue properly.

We had another dance in the evening, and finished with Sir Roger de Coverley. Partners had to go under the mistletoe at the end, so of course all the fellows chose the girls they were engaged to or sweet on, and I was left out. So was the—Mr. More. I didn't want the mistletoe part, but I wanted to dance, so I felt quite excited when he came up to me.

"I am afraid of making a mistake," he said.

"It is a mistake to be afraid," I told him. "You would never learn, you see, if you didn't make them." I looked quite innocent, as if I didn't understand what he meant.

"Would it be a mistake if I asked you to dance this?" he inquired.

"It would be a mistake for me to say before I was asked," I answered; but I couldn't help laughing.

"Will you dance the mistletoe dance with me, Lady Minx?" he said.

"Yes," I told him.

He kissed me on the forehead. He is a silly—man! I suppose he thought I was stuck-up and shouldn't like it if he did it like the others.

December 29th.—He *is* a bounder after all. He is sulky about something, and hasn't spoken to me all day, except when he couldn't help it. He didn't even smile when I gave him three written corrections. He is a *hateful* bounder, and he is quite old. He told me her he was thirty-one. It has been a horrid, dull day, and I have come to bed early. Of course I don't care; but I wish I knew what he is disagreeable about.

December 30th—Afternoon.—I have found out. Maude is a beast, and it is all her fault. She was talking to Frank. Engaged couples think that they can tell one another everything. She told him what a fuss I made about Mr. More, and how I called him the Bounder. They didn't notice him till afterwards, but she says she is sure he must have heard. He is going on New Year's Day, instead of stopping the week. He told father it was important business. I don't believe it, and I hate him. I hate Maude. I hate everything.

He might have known I didn't mean it; but he is a—— No, he isn't. *He isn't.* He is very nice, and I was very horrid, and I deserve it; but I am very miserable.

I'd tell mother, and ask her to explain to him, but she never can keep a secret, and they'd think it was because I liked him. That is absurd, because he is quite old. It is only because he has been kind, and I don't like him to think I was rude to him. I wasn't after I found out that he wasn't a bounder.

Evening.—Thank goodness I have set Ralph Featherby down, anyway! They came over, and he would talk to me, and he called Mr. More a bounder. I told him that Mr. More was a better man than he was, or ever would be. I used to be friends with Ralph, but I shan't be any more.

They all say I've been very disagreeable to-day, except Maude. She offered to speak to Mr. More about it. I said I didn't care what he thought, so there was no need. She said I was a little silly. Then she kissed me, and said I wasn't.

"I'll tell you what to do, Minxie dear," she said. "Just wait till we're seeing the New Year in, and go up to him and wish him a very happy New Year, and say it *very nicely*. Poor little Sis!"

Maude is *not* a beast, and she is sensible.

December 31st.—I mean January 1st, because it is past one o'clock. A very, very happy New Year to everyone everywhere. I promise to try to be very good and kind this new year.

I was very miserable this morning—I mean yesterday—till I went to church. Then I prayed for Mr. More to find out that I had left off thinking him a bounder, and felt better. He did not look so cross, and when he had to speak to me he spoke quite nicely. I thought several times that he was going to make friends, but he didn't. Once he sighed. I had a good mind to tell him then, but I thought Maude's way was better, and she said she would arrange that I walked with him when we went out in the avenue to wait for the new year. She always manages things.

She has been a perfect *dear* to-day. She did my hair so as to make me look quite grown up, and picked out the things I was to wear, and made me lie down because I was pale; and I heard her telling Mr. More that I was much nicer than I really seemed.

"Minxie is young and thoughtless, and says things she does not mean sometimes," she told him; "but she wouldn't hurt anybody for worlds, really. I think a great deal of my little sister."

She paired us all up when the time came, and made Mr. More take me. The other pairs got out of the way, like engaged couples do. He didn't say anything, and neither did

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I; and I was in a *dreadful* flutter; and everything was very, very quiet and still, and it was quite warm; and it made me feel serious to think that the year was going, and I could never have it back again; and there were such a lot of things that I wished I hadn't done. And then the clock struck, and the bells in the village church rang out a peal; and I turned to him.

"A very, very happy New Year to you, Mr. More," I said. "*Such* a happy one!"

He started as if he had been shot; and then he coughed, as if he wanted to clear his throat before he answered.

"God bless you this year, and every year, Lady Ethelberta," he said. "I wish I could help to make them happy for you, but——"

Maude is *not* a beast, and she is sensible.

And then he stopped. I dug my nails in my hands, waiting for him to go on; but he didn't, and I felt I *must* tell him.

"It was true—what you heard—Mr. More," I said. (My voice was all shaky.) "But I wouldn't say it *now* for anything, and—it's the New Year, and I—I'm sorry—and please don't call me Lady Ethelberta."

He started again and caught hold of me, and turned me round to the moon. There was just a little bit of moon shining through the edge of a cloud; and now I shall always love the moonlight.

"What may I call you?" he asked. I did not think he could be so excited.

"What you like," I said. I knew I was giving myself away, but I didn't care.

"My darling!" he cried. "My own little darling!"

"Yes," I consented. It was *just* what I wanted him to say!

He is going to tell father before they go to bed; and I shall be engaged before I am "out." Engaged at seventeen! Engaged to *him!*

I don't feel a bit sleepy, and I am going along to dear old Maude's room to hug her.

Half-past Two.—Maude says she never thought he was a bounder, and she could see that he loved me the moment he saw me.

A happy new year to everybody and everything, and many of them; and I *will* make it a happy new year for *him!*

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ACTRESS.

Being a Description of the Joys and Sorrows of Those who Amuse the British Public.

By Gertie Millar

(*The Famous Gaiety Theatre Star*).

The Editor of the Royal has asked me to jot down a short description of the manner in which a musical comedy actress spends a day during the busiest period of her life; that is, whilst she is rehearsing a new part in addition to appearing before the public every evening. He kindly suggests that an account of my own doings daily under such circumstances would interest his readers. I wonder why?

Still, I shall endeavour to carry out his wishes, and I hope the good-natured reader will overlook the frequent use of the personal pronoun, unfortunately indispensable in an article of this kind.

I probably spend a day in just the same way as the majority of musical comedy actresses. Perhaps the reading of this article will help to remove the impression quite a lot of people have as to the capacity of actresses for carrying out the art of doing nothing—and doing it very well.

Theatrical people, if a certain philosophical poet is to be believed, are more likely than other folks to suffer from a bad state of health, a lack of capital, and idiocy. Our calling, which of necessity is carried on during hours more or less nocturnal, gives us little opportunity of acquiring that robust state of health, wealth, and wisdom which a habit of retiring early, and therefore of rising correspondingly early, is declared to bring about. I am afraid I am quite an unlikely person ever to win those three great prizes on such conditions (if they apply as much to a woman as to a man). I dare not take the risk of becoming, perhaps, a bad example to others; therefore I shall not enter into details as to the exact hour of the morning at which I am accustomed to rise. It will be sufficient to say that on my busiest days, such as that which I am about to describe, I breakfast at nine, and skim through my morning's letters and the newspaper.

Half-an-hour later I may be found, looking rather serious and matronly no doubt, in earnest consultation with cook—as behoves a thoroughly domesticated housewife—deciding as to the choice of viands for our six o'clock dinner, and taking a glance through the weekly accounts with puckered brows. I am regarded as being rather fond of housekeeping matters.

No matter how busy a day may be, my conscience never allows me to neglect my pets. By half-past ten on this beautiful morning in early summer I am prepared to give my dogs their daily exercise. Before leaving the house in their company, however, I look into the dining-room for a few moments to have the usual chat with my two grey parrots, an extremely intelligent pair of feathered friends.

With my Maltese terrier and my French bulldog at my side, I cross the road, successfully evading the flying crowd of omnibuses—motor-driven and horse-drawn—cabs, etc., and enter the shady grounds of Russell Square, now delightful with the dainty green of young foliage and fragrant with flowers. On mornings when time is not of so much consequence as it is to-day I generally drive

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to Hyde Park for an hour's stroll with my canine companions, but in busy times I am content with the more restricted area of the Square. For half-an-hour I walk about here, stopping now and then to chat with a neighbour, or to remonstrate with my dogs, who are apparently affected by the exhilarating morning air, and are exhibiting a friskiness suggestive of intense satisfaction.

Shortly after eleven I am home again. Having, at 11.30, an appointment with one of the theatrical costumiers at his place, I take advantage of the intervening minutes to run over one or two songs for the forthcoming new piece. I am considerably assisted in this by my husband, the songs being of his composition, and we are getting on famously when a servant comes to tell me that the carriage is ready to take me to the costumier's.

There is a little excusable bustling about, and presently I am being whirled through the thronged streets on the way to Miss Fisher's.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that in the case of a new production at the Gaiety Theatre the question of costumes is very important. Dresses, of course, are designed by a clever artist under the guidance of the producer, and the principal players are consulted in the matter—especially the ladies. My business at the costumier's this morning, the making of certain of my dresses being in their hands, is that which may be described as a preliminary consultation. I find the whole place in a state of briskness that must be very gratifying to the head of the firm. As the employment of quite a number of different costumiers is necessary for a Gaiety production, it often happens that I have to visit two or three of them in one day.

On this occasion I have the satisfaction of learning that my principal costume for the new piece is progressing as favourably as circumstances permit. Only lady readers will appreciate my experience of the next twenty minutes or so, and with the knowledge ever before me that the call for rehearsal is for twelve o'clock, I am naturally anxious to be on my way to the theatre with the least possible delay. At last I am free, and I hurry into the brougham with a "make haste, please," to the coachman, and am quickly driven to the Gaiety, arriving only ten minutes late.

I made my first London appearance at the Gaiety in *The Toreador*, and I have not forgotten my feelings when I appeared at rehearsal to sing "Keep Off the Grass." I quite made up my mind on that occasion that a rehearsal was an unpleasant experience. I am still of the same opinion. Everybody seems disposed to develop shortness of temper and display something extremely like peevishness. The best-natured person is liable to get out of sorts during the ordeal. Even the lady principals, who are otherwise angelic, frequently become very cross indeed. After a couple of hours spent

Only lady readers will appreciate my experience of the next twenty minutes.

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I have to run off, driving post haste to have my photograph taken.

in rehearsing a new part it is quite possible to be rude to other people. The most intimate friends quarrel at rehearsal—for the time being, "making it up" directly business is at an end. I am sure it is a wise rule of the management that no member of the public is permitted to be present on such occasions, otherwise some pretty illusions would be dispelled—for instance, the idea that the leading lady can possibly do anything but smile in a bewitching manner! Thank goodness, audiences know nothing of rehearsal episodes!—they only see us when we are good-tempered.

To-day it is found that we are not nearly so well advanced in our parts as we had imagined. We have to repeat scenes over and over again in a very exasperating way—and things seem generally in a muddle.

In one place the chorus ladies and gentlemen are energetically doing their best under the direction of one of the producer's assistants; in another several principals are mumbling solemnly lines which are sure to be repeated to the accompaniment of roars of laughter on the first night.

As for me, during the time when I am not "on" in the scene, I run off to a quiet corner to practise one of my dances, either by myself or with the "arranger." As I am personally very fond of dancing, it is the one part of the rehearsal that I enjoy. At my cue I rush back to join in the rehearsal of "lines" again, the process being repeated according to the time at my disposal between cues for my exit and entrance. Here I may say that most of those who are rehearsing read their parts from the book, thus acquiring a knowledge of the words by easy stages, and avoiding the wearying task of "learning their lines" in the orthodox fashion by lonely study. The libretto of a musical comedy fortunately does not call for much of this. It is so much nicer to learn one's part almost unconsciously from frequently reading it at rehearsals. At least, I never learn the words of a part in any other way. My songs, on the contrary, I commit to memory almost at once, as they require special study.

Much has been said and written of the anguish caused the authors of modern musical comedy when pages of their "books" are cut out to make way for something that appears of greater value in the eyes of the man whose authority is final; but how much more heartbreaking is the experience of an actress who is given what she considers "a lovely song" and a particularly delightful dance, practising both assiduously until she is perfect—fancy her feelings when, a few days before the first performance, she is coolly informed that they "must be cut," and something else substituted. This is the sort of thing that happens at rehearsals; but, on the other hand, the "eleventh-hour" ideas substituted in this way have often proved enormously successful.

There are days on the eve of the public production when the performers have not sufficient time to leave the theatre for a meal. They are at work rehearsing from ten in the morning until midnight without a break of more than half-an-hour at a time. At such times the management very kindly provides the needful refreshment to all concerned inside the theatre. On the occasion that I am writing about, however, there is no necessity to remain within its walls. At half-past one the welcome word is given to pause

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for lunch, and all hurry away for that purpose. Several of the principals have arranged to lunch together, and we all trip off, a merry little party, forgetting the woes of rehearsal, to a neighbouring restaurant, with the stage-manager's warning: "Second act at half-past two," ringing in our ears.

Alas! for poor me, I can only afford a narrow twenty minutes for lunch, when I have to run off, driving post-haste to have my photograph taken for a weekly illustrated journal.

This done, I am condemned to another rush back to the theatre, where I arrive on the stage just in time to hear my cue.

The afternoon rehearsal is quite as trying as that of the morning, perhaps more so, as most of those taking part are beginning to feel tired, and long for a rest. Tempers grow rustier as time progresses, until at four o'clock we are mercifully released, and we begin to recover that sweetness and serenity which are more in keeping with our personal appearance as the public knows it.

I am soon driving away to call upon a friend, and am considerably refreshed by an indulgence in afternoon tea, astonishing myself a few minutes later by consenting to a short game of lawn tennis—my favourite pastime—on my friend's lawn.

But I am quickly again on the wing, driving homewards to dress for dinner at six o'clock, a meal that, owing to the approaching evening of hard work on the stage, is necessarily a light one so far as I am concerned.

Between half-past six and seven o'clock I enjoy a rest before starting for the theatre, whither I am driven shortly after the latter hour. The most strenuous part of my day is about to begin!

Yes; it must be borne in mind that, under any circumstances, the musical comedy actress must always be bright, smiling, and active. She may be feeling tired, or ill, or out of temper; but the public must not see any symptom of these ordinary-mortal, commonplace things. And there is not an actress in London who denies the public the privilege they pay for. London's great audiences are her personal friends, as it were, and she takes care that they are not disappointed. So she sings, dances, and laughs merrily all the while. And it is a delightful experience to her to realise the appreciation that a generous English audience so heartily expresses. It is a great reward for a little effort.

It is when I am snugly tucked up that I invariably study my new songs.

Since the collecting of picture postcards became a hobby, I find myself occupied between the acts autographing some dozens of them, sent to me for the purpose by absolute strangers. But I enjoy it all.

I have had a busy day of it, but even when, after eleven o'clock, the curtain comes down, my work is not quite finished.

When supper is over, and I retire for the night, there is always a roll of music at my bedside. It is when I am snugly tucked up that I invariably study my new songs.

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Forty thousand Mohammedans commencing their special evening prayer preparatory to starting on their pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Devout Mohammedan.

A Glimpse of a Great Festival.

By Alexander James.

To-morrow they will have set out for Mecca: to-night they are preparing themselves in prayer.

"From the declining of the sun until the dusk of the night," as Mohammed commanded them, these na ives of Allahabad are celebrating their farewell feast preparatory to beginning their annual pilgrimage to the birthplace of their Prophet. To-morrow they will be travelling in one huge company, rich and poor mingling together for once, if never again.

It is the ambition of every Moslem to make this pilgrimage at least once during his lifetime, and those who are setting out are keenly envied by their less fortunate fellows whom business or poverty keeps at home. The journey is regarded wholly as a religious ceremony, and it does not bear the slightest resemblance to a holiday excursion. Hence it is permissible for women to make this pilgrimage unescorted by their husbands, and, to the credit of the Moslem discipline be it said, there is no reason why they should not do so. The journey is regulated by fixed tradition, and the strictest order is enforced throughout its course.

Some hours before sunrise the vast caravan files from the city, and a brave show it makes. The pilgrims have been divided into companies, and they ride on camels or recline in litters slung between two camels, according to their position and wealth. All the camels are painted yellow, and decorated with embroidered trappings, those which head each company being particularly conspicuous with nodding plumes of red ostrich feathers between their ears.

But gorgeous as the general appearance of the cavalcade may be, it is completely eclipsed by the magnificence of the camel which bears the covering for Mohammed's tomb. This animal is painted like the rest, and is covered with tapestry of the finest

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In this position the pilgrims repeat "Verily, God's guidance is the guidance, and we are bidden to resign ourselves unto the Lord, for He takes us to Mecca."

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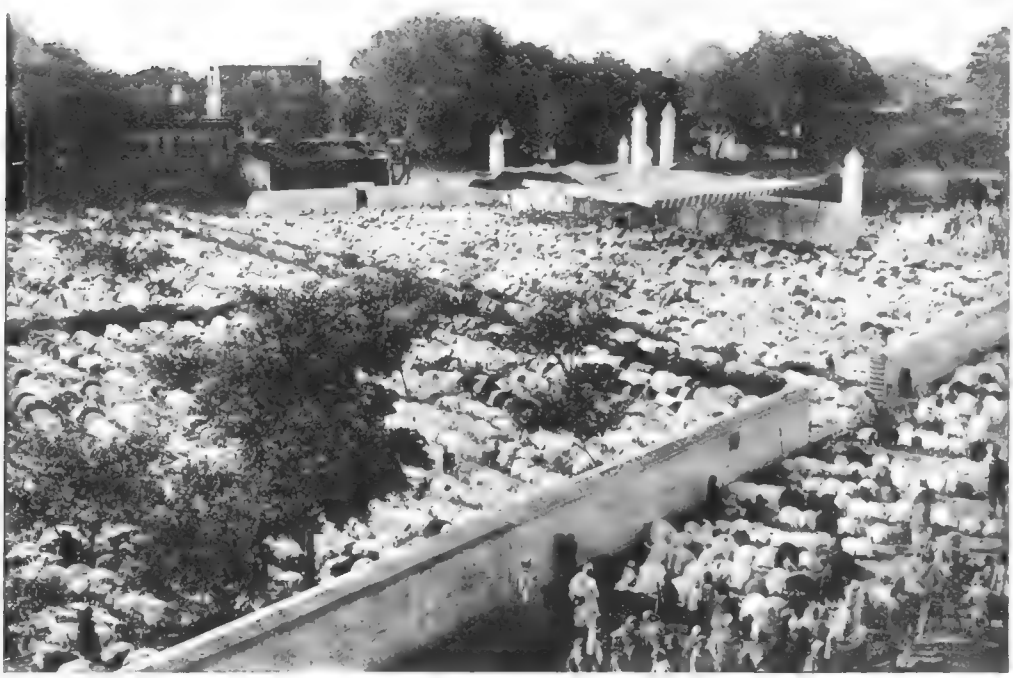
colour and texture, the whole of it being hidden from view with the exception of the head and neck. This camel has been specially bred for this one journey, and on its completion it will be regarded as sacred, and will live in luxurious idleness for the rest of its days.

It matters not whether the roads and weather be good or bad, the caravan will reach Mecca in thirty-eight days, neither more nor less, for so has it been decreed. As a rule these pilgrims travel from two in the morning till two in the afternoon, resting and sleeping during the heat of the day. If, as

When the weary journey has at length been completed, the pilgrims enter the town of Mecca and commence the observance of the greatest religious festival in their creed. There is no element of penance in their ceremonies, which are made up chiefly of the offering of prayer and sacrifices. When they have duly prepared themselves in this way, the time arrives for the culminating point of the pilgrimage, the placing of the great pavilion which they have brought from India upon the tomb of Mohammed. The covering of last year is removed and sent to Constantinople, where it is cut up as presents



The third and last salaam of the evening prayer.

frequently happens, the heat should prove intense, they will travel only while it is dark.

Thus ordered and mapped out, the way of the pilgrims might be expected to lie smoothly; but they have to cross a territory infested with plundering bands of Arabs, to whom the wealth of the travellers means everything and the object of the journey counts as nothing of importance. Should the caravan be molested by these freebooters the pilgrims will offer a stout resistance, for they have anticipated this as all other emergencies, and they have provided themselves with small cannon and rifles.

for the favoured few. At the same time the hangings at the sides of the tomb are taken away, and a new set put in their place. These are brought from Cairo, so that the two ends of the Moslem world may be fully represented in this their greatest rite.

Sometimes it happens that the officials in charge of the discarded hangings and pavilion will allow some portion of them to be sold to the pilgrims. The prices charged are enormous, but the purchase is considered to be of inestimable value, so that all parties are pleased.

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SILVA'S SCHEME

An Exciting Story of Plot and Counterplot.

By Charles M. Clarke.

I.

Dazzling flashes of vivid lightning rent asunder the black canopy of Heaven, illuminating every mountain peak for miles around.

Rattling discharges of Heaven's artillery crashed through the gorges, with deafening roar, only to be echoed up and down the valleys.

All the forces of Nature seemed at war, as two unconcerned specimens of humanity wended their way down a steep gully carved by some natural convulsion out of the solid rock.

"Is not this grand, Silva? Does it not make one feel how small one is by comparison?"

Then, with a slight shudder, clutching her companion's arm, she continued:

"Holy Mother! that flash was too awful!"

"Mariquita, mine, you are frightened."

"You are stupid. I, the daughter of the boldest hunter on the Pyrences, frightened? Absurd! I'll show you. Give me your gun. Should the next flash disclose a living thing, I'll shoot it."

Separated only by brief intervals, the flashes were instantaneous in their duration, but almost as the girl spoke and seized her companion's gun the horizon became illuminated. On a crag in the distance a goat appeared, only to fall, shot through the heart by Mariquita.

Silva Manuelo was not much of a hero—only a poor man who worked in the iron mines; but he possessed a brave heart, and in the eyes of Mariquita he was a demi-god; for had he not saved her life, when she got lost in the mountains, and the wolves attacked her?

After the goat had fallen from his perch, the lightning flashes became fainter and the thunder crashes less sonorous, but the rain descended in torrents. Unwinding his sarápe, Silva folded it carefully round his companion's shoulders, and, after a brief search, discovered a cave, in which the pair took shelter.

The cave wherein they found themselves was occasionally used by the smugglers, who infested the frontier, and, on looking around, Silva perceived some straw and old boxes, which had been left behind.

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With the aid of these he soon contrived to build a fire, which he kindled with his flint and steel, fanning the incipient blaze with his sombrero. Then he rolled a couple of *cigarrillos*, one of which he handed to Mariquita.

He produced his spirit flask. With a slight gesture of reluctance, Mariquita took one tiny sip as a precaution against the damp; then, seated on two empty kegs, they puffed their *cigarrillos* in comparative comfort.

Drawing her mantilla coquettishly across her face as Silva suddenly bent forward to kiss her, she said:

"No, no, my dear friend, that must not be. No respectable girl permits herself to be embraced till the good priest has spoken the words. You have been to the great city. Tell me what is it like?"

"It is grand! There must be more than three hundred houses; and such shops! There are four churches, and a theatre; then there is the palace, where *el Presidénte* lives, and the great, ugly gaol."

"Ah! yes, yes! But the *fiésta?* What are they going to do to-morrow?"

"Well, first of all, *el Alcálde* Don Lomay Corradi will attend High Mass at the Cathedral, then *el Generál* Don Loma y Corradi will review all the troops on the Plaza. Won't that be a grand sight?"

Mariquita grew so excited at the description of all these glories that she allowed her *cigarrillo* to go out, on discovering which she bent her head forward to re-light it from Silva's. As she rested one hand on his knee to steady herself, her lover, seeing his opportunity, imprinted a kiss on her cheek.

Immediately she was erect on her feet, her eyes glaring like those of a wild beast, as she cut him savagely across the face with her folded fan. "Down on your knees, ruffian, and beg my pardon for this outrage!" she shrieked.

Obediently he sank on one knee, raising his sombrero as he said:

"Mariquita, you are right; forgive me; only your beauty fires my blood, so that I lose all command over myself."

In an instant the storm of rage subsided, giving place to a soft gleam of tenderness in her velvety eyes, while her mouth melted into the sweetest smile.

"Dear heart, I do forgive you! But do you really think me so beautiful? Well, I am glad if it is so, and, indeed, I was too angry; but no man has ever kissed me. It seems such a sacred thing, a sacrament of love, which only the Church can sanctify. However, tell me more about the *fiésta*, please."

"Well, after the review, *el Presidénte* will give a State banquet at the palace—such a huge place! Why, there cannot be less than a dozen apartments in it! Then he winds up the day by paying a gala visit to the theatre!"

"But how strange it appears. Are all the great men in Iotara called by the same name? Pray, how many Don Lomas are there?"

"Only one; but he holds many offices, and wears many different uniforms to suit them all, besides drawing the official salary attached to each function."

By this time the storm was over. The two left the shelter of the cave, and moved forward in the direction of the big town. In about an hour they arrived at their destination, just as the sun, amid a halo of burnished glory, was sinking to rest behind the mountains.

The entire city was *en fête*. Mariquita had never witnessed such a spectacle before—so much life, merriment, and noise almost terrified her, so that she sidled quite close up to her companion for protection.

A little inquiry enabled them to find in the principal street the house where her uncle lived, whose guest she was to be for the next few days; and Silva, having committed her to his charge and drunk a cup of wine, wandered off to secure for himself a lodging elsewhere.

II.

Mariquita rose early, impatient to join in all the amusements which were to enliven the town. She had scarcely finished her breakfast when Silva arrived to escort her.

The streets were thronged with visitors from the villages in the valley, nearly half the population of the pigmy Republic was present at the *fiésta*.

As Silva and his companion wended their way to the Cathedral, many a head was turned to gaze at the pretty Spanish maiden, and many a muttered word of admiration escaped the lips of the male portion of the crowd, while frequent glances of envy were shot at the fortunate man who seemed to be on such good terms with the dainty señorita.

Don Loma was an unscrupulous man; he allowed nothing to thwart him in the pursuit of love or revenge. Situated as he was, his power was autocratic, and it unfortunately happened for Mariquita and her lover that he had caught sight of the former in the Cathedral. Becoming desperately fascinated, he ordered one of his attendants to follow the

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girl, discover her identity and place of abode. Thus he learnt her name, and found she was the niece of Gonzales, who kept the *bodega*.

All the time of the bull-fight the eyes of Don Loma were devouring the charms of the unconscious maiden. Others, too, noticed the marked admiration, and many a woman whispered to her neighbour behind her fan:

"May the Saints guard her! It had been better the child had stayed at home than have come here to attract the attention of *el Presidénte*."

During the afternoon the town was quiet, for after the mid-day meal the entire population retired for the customary siesta; but there was a general awakening as the hour for the review approached.

Silva had secured two places in front of a balcony, and Mariquita had never seen anything so grand. The splendid uniforms, the prancing horses, the precision of the manœuvres completely entranced her senses; but the climax was the march past of the whole army, cavalry and infantry, one hundred and sixty strong, preceded by a solitary nine-pounder, which represented the artillery branch of the service.

As *el Generál* turned to leave the ground, he raised his eyes, and, with a bold smile, saluted her in a way which caused a vivid blush to spread over her face.

Silva also noticed the offensive gesture, and the effect it produced on his *fiancée*, and determined that it should be a long time before he brought his precious one to Iotara again.

The programme of the *fiésta* had been faithfully carried out, still a number of the younger people had not drained their cup of pleasure to the dregs. Thus it happened that the courtyard of the *bodega*, kept by Gonzales, was crowded at midnight by a giddy throng; all around at intervals were placed tables, at which men were playing dominoes and quaffing wine.

The moon poured a flood of silvery light over the scene; festoons of coloured oil-lamps hung across the yard; while the inspiring music, punctuated by the staccato rattle of castanets, enticed many of the youth of both sexes to indulge in the *cachuca*. It was all so redolent of Spain; so graceful, so animated, so sensuous!

In the confusion Mariquita had lost Silva, and before she again caught sight of him had responded to the invitation of a young picador to tread a measure.

Silva suffered a keen pang of jealousy as he watched her led off; he was turning gloomily away, when Gonzales accosted him:

"Ah, Silva, you do not dance? So much the better. Sit down here with me, and try conclusions for a flask of wine over a game of matador."

He was soon deeply absorbed in the national game, and so failed to notice the entry of several soldiery upon the scene; but the old tavern-keeper was more alert, and, starting to his feet, he muttered:

"Santorcaz here! That bodes mischief."

"Santorcaz! Who, pray, is he? Why should his presence mean mischief?"

"He is the jackal of *el Presidénte*—his spy!" As he spoke he indicated the man referred to with his cigarette.

Santorcaz did not appear bent on any act of turpitude greater than the rolling of a *cigarrillo*, though his eyes roved searchingly round the assembly, till they remained for an instant fixed on the graceful form of Mariquita. Then he lighted his *cigarrillo* saluting the domino players with a "*Buenas noches, caballeros!*" and stealthily departed.

Shortly after this, another individual entered the yard. This time it was Don Loma himself. With an air of condescension he stalked up to the table occupied by the host and Silva.

"Welcome, Don Loma!" said the former, in a constrained tone. "It is not often that your Excellency honours my humble *bodega* with your august presence."

"No, Señor Gonzales; the cares of State leave me little time for friendly intercourse. However, now that I am here, let us be sociable. Bring forward some flasks of your best wine, and let this company drink a cup at my expense."

The innkeeper hastened to execute the order; while *el Presidénte* took his vacant seat, and courteously offered Silva a *cigarrillo*.

"You are a stranger in Iotara, I believe? Pardon my curiosity, but may I ask, without impertinence, señor, who you are and whence you come?"

"I am beneath your Excellency's notice. I am only a humble man, who works in the iron mines. I live in the village beyond the river Balira, and am called Silva Manuelo, at your service."

"No man need be humble who can boast of citizenship in this glorious Republic. I have seen you several times to-day, accompanied by a very beautiful girl—your sister, I presume?" he queried indifferently, as he

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allowed two streams of smoke to escape from his nostrils.

"On the contrary, *Excellenza*, she is my betrothed, and hails from my own village."

At this juncture Gonzales returned bearing the wine. Cups were filled, and shouts of "*Viva el Presidénte!*" echoed round the yard.

"Continue your game, *amigos mios*. As for me, I will take a stroll round amongst your guests." Saying which, with a dignified bow, he left the table, and strode towards the group of dancers, while Silva's glance followed him uneasily.

There was a slight pause in the revelry. Mariquita, hot and thirsty, was vigorously fanning herself, while the picador, with whom she had been dancing, went in search of some lemonade for her refreshment.

Don Loma approached the unattended maiden, saying softly:

"Señorita, will you honour me with your company in a dance?"

It was far too flattering a proposal, coming from the greatest man in the State, for a country girl to decline; so, having sipped her lemonade, the couple were soon engaged in a fandango. Presently, as he came close to her, he said, in a tone of concentrated passion:

"You are as graceful as you are beautiful, señorita. I trust we may very often meet."

A blush of mingled shame and pleasure flushed her cheeks, while for a moment she regretted having consented to dance with him.

Imperceptibly the couple had drawn into the shadow of the wall, when, with a rapid movement, Don Loma seized the girl round her supple waist, and, before resistance was possible, had kissed her full on the lips.

There was a cry as from a wounded tigress. Quick as thought her hand had snatched the stiletto from the coils of her raven hair, and had he not grasped her arm the infuriated maiden would have plunged its blade into his heart.

In a moment all was confusion. Silva heard the cry, and recognised the voice; then with two bounds he sprang across the yard, to find his beloved one struggling in the embrace of Don Loma. Without waiting for any explanation he seized him round the body. "Scoundrel!" he growled through his clenched teeth, as, lifting his Excellency off his feet, he hurled him heavily to the ground.

However, his triumph was not of long duration, for Don Loma, staggering on to his legs, shouted to the soldiers, and in less time than it takes to describe the fracas, Silva was being conveyed by four of them to the guard-house.

III.

The next morning Silva was conducted by an armed escort to the court-house, which was crowded with spectators. In matters of justice the little Republic was somewhat primitive, and had not advanced one iota during the thousand years that had elapsed since its foundation by the first Bishop of Urgel.

Don Loma, in his official capacity of *Alcálde*, presided over the tribunal. There was an ominous scowl on his face which boded ill for the prisoner—in fact, his condemnation was a foregone conclusion from the beginning.

After the formal opening of the proceedings, in which Silva was charged with an attempt on the life of *el Presidénte*, the first witness was called; and Santorcaz stepped forward to depose, with calm effrontery, that on the previous day he had several times heard the prisoner threaten to deprive *el Presidénte* of life directly an opportunity occurred.

Other witnesses followed, who described the assault, and then *el Alcálde*, without calling on the prisoner for any defence, pronounced judgment.

"Prisoner, you have been proved guilty of a dastardly and premeditated outrage on my person, with intent to deprive me of life, and the Republic of my services as its *Presidénte*. By rights your life should pay the penalty for your crime; but inasmuch as your attempt proved unsuccessful, we are disposed to clemency. The sentence, therefore, of the Court is that you be kept in solitary confinement in the fortress of San Juan until death shall release you."

Mariquita was led shrieking from the court-house by her uncle, and her lover was marched off to his place of durance, whilst affairs in Iotara resumed their ordinary routine.

If Don Loma imagined that his plans with regard to Mariquita were any nearer fulfilment, now that he had removed the principal obstacle from his path, he was grievously mistaken, as he discovered a few days later, when he sought an interview with the maiden.

She received his advances with scorn and loathing; nor did she hesitate to designate the testimony of the chief witness against her lover as the blackest perjury. Still, she

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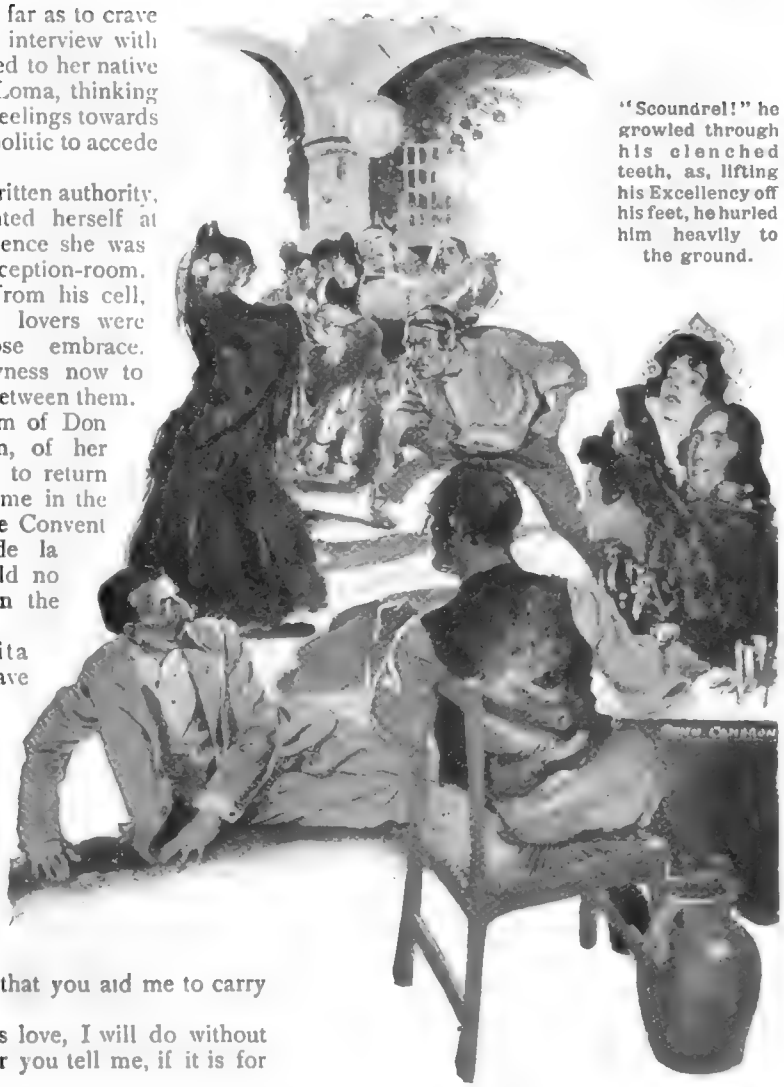
humbled herself so far as to crave one favour—a final interview with Silva ere she returned to her native village; and Don Loma, thinking it might soften her feelings towards himself, deemed it politic to accede to the request.

Armed with the written authority, our heroine presented herself at the prison gate, whence she was ushered into the reception-room. Silva was fetched from his cell, and soon the two lovers were locked in a close embrace. There was no coyness now to interpose a barrier between them.



"Scoundrel!" he growled through his clenched teeth, as, lifting his Excellency off his feet, he hurled him heavily to the ground.

She informed him of Don Loma's persecution, of her fixed determination to return forthwith to her home in the valley, and enter the Convent of Santa Maria de la Peña, since life held no sunshine for her in the future.

"But, Mariquita mine, before you leave Iotara, I have a scheme for the accomplishment of which I rely on your assistance. You owe me your life, my betrothed, for did I not save you from the wolves? Now in payment, I intreat —nay, I command, that you aid me to carry out my project."

"Silva, my heart's love, I will do without questioning whatever you tell me, if it is for your good."

"I knew that I might rely on your help, sweetheart. Now *you* are going to immolate your young life in the service of religion with the good sisters; but *I* cannot eat my heart out here in this living death, so I want you to release me from my prison cage."

"But how, dearest, is that to be accomplished?"

"I will tell you. To-morrow, shortly before midnight, post yourself on the rising ground the other side of the river, about a hundred yards from the fort. Provide yourself with a reliable gun; then scan the wall carefully till you see a white handkerchief tied round the cross-bar of a certain window. It will be that of my cell. My forehead will be four inches below that mark. As the first stroke of the hour chimes from the cathedral clock take a steady aim and fire—that shot will secure my freedom!"

"I cannot consent!" she exclaimed most positively, as she shrunk away from him in horror.

We have no record of the arguments used by Silva to combat her decision. Suffice it to relate that he conquered the girl's scruples, and, woman like, whilst vowing she would never consent, consented.

He hurriedly gave her a few final instructions, bidding her tell her uncle that she must retire early to bed in order to procure

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night's sound sleep to fit her for her journey home the next day. Then, when the house was quiet, she must steal out with Silva's gun, which had been left at the *bodega*, and, after firing the shot that would release him, drop the weapon into the river, then make the best of her way home along the same road which the two had traversed on their ill-fated visit to Iotara.

All being settled, the lovers once more clung together in a final rapturous embrace, and failed to notice the cautious opening of the door.

"God bless you, my love! To-morrow you shall be free!" she sobbed hysterically.

"Thanks, beloved! At midnight, then, Silva's scheme will be by your assistance accomplished, and once more I shall know the joy of freedom."

"Señorita, the time is up; I must request you to retire," interrupted the harsh voice of Santorcaz, the gaoler. The lovers wrenched themselves apart in mute agony. Then Mariquita was escorted outside the precincts of the gaol, while Silva was conducted back to his cell.

Sometime during that afternoon Santorcaz made his way up to the palace, when he reported to *el Presidénte* the concluding words he had overheard pass between the prisoner and Mariquita:

"God bless you, my love! To-morrow you shall be free!"

"Yes, yes; that is what the girl said," impatiently interrupted Don Loma. "But what reply did Silva make? That is more important."

"'Thanks, beloved. At midnight, then, my scheme will be carried out, and with your aid I shall be free once more.' Those were his very words, your Excellency. I do not know what their precious scheme is; but, anyway, it is fixed to take place at twelve o'clock to-morrow night. Has your Excellency any orders?"

"No, sergeant; I will attend to this matter myself. You can go. *Adios!*" And he waved his hand in token of dismissal.

All that day and the next the weary hours dragged out their slow length for Silva, whilst Mariquita remained in a feverish condition of wild excitement, her nerves strung to the highest tension. She was really anxious to obey her lover's command; yet she dreaded an act, the commission of which was most repugnant to her gentle nature. Too late for escape, she deeply regretted having undertaken it. However, it was now impossible to elude the consequences of her rash promise, and only the knowledge of the slow torture that her lover would suffer under the malignant persecution of Don Loma nerved her to perform her part in working out the plot.

The appointed time was rapidly approaching. Silva had partaken of his last meal some hours since, and been locked in his cell for the night. The clock had chimed the quarter before the fatal hour; it was time, therefore, for him to perform his part in the tragedy. He drew the table close up against the window of his cell, mounted upon it, and commenced to tie the white handkerchief round the cross-bar. Then he rested his throbbing brow against the cool iron stanchion to which he had clung to steady himself, as he repeated devoutly an *Ave Maria* and *Pater noster*.

At this moment the key grated in the lock, the cell door was flung violently open, and Don Loma entered, to enjoy and gloat over the frustrated scheme of escape.

Seeing the prisoner standing on the table, occupied with some work on the bars of the window, he shouted:

"So, so, Señor Silva, you are filing your prison bars? That, then, is your fine plan of escape, is it? But I have nipped your project in the bud, young fellow, and you shall never get another chance, I promise you; for in future I will have you heavily ironed. Come down at once, sirrah!"

Silva paid no heed to the order. Don Loma rushed madly towards him, and, clutching his legs, essayed to drag him off the table. Weakened as he was by confinement and prison fare, the task proved easy of accomplishment, and the prisoner rolled heavily on to the floor, whilst his assailant jumped upon the table and proceeded to test the integrity of the bars.

"For the love of God come down, your Excellency!" And in *his* turn he tried to drag his enemy away from the window.

Too late! For at that instant the clock tolled the first stroke of midnight. There came a sharp report, followed by the ping of a bullet, and Don Loma fell back to the floor of the cell with a dull thud, lifeless.

Then an idea penetrated the prisoner's brain with as much force as the bullet had intruded on *el Presidénte*.

He quickly changed clothes with the dead man, muffling his own face in the collar of the borrowed cloak, while, to conceal his identity still further, he turned down the brim of his sombrero. Thus disguised, he left the prison-cell, locking the door behind him. He walked down the stairway, handed the

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keys to the chief gaoler, and, wishing him "Good night," passed out of the building.

Once outside the heavy portals, he looked round for the horse which he guessed had carried Don Loma. To his great relief he discovered it, being led up and down, but a short distance away. The orderly, seeing him, hastened forward.

Seizing the reins, Silva mounted, and trotted out of the town at a brisk rate; he forded the river, and took the road towards the mountains. Turning round in his saddle, he saw that the whole town was illuminated and in a state of commotion; then the clang of the alarm bell smote his ear, speedily followed by the boom of a cannon. Evidently his escape had been discovered. Digging his spurs deep into the reeking flanks of his steed, he galloped on at a break-neck pace, and in less than a quarter of an hour he had overtaken Mariquita.

Hearing the sharp clatter of the horse's hoofs behind her, she turned round in terror. At first she failed to recognise her pursuer, mistaking him in the dark for Don Loma, whose clothes her lover was wearing; but directly he spoke there was no room for doubt, and she well-nigh swooned from excess of joy. Then, stooping forward, he tenderly lifted her on to the saddle in front of him, hurriedly explaining his marvellous escape, while she clung to him as though to make sure of the reality of his presence. Then they galloped hard for dear life to the friendly shelter of the mountains. On reaching which they turned the horse loose, and proceeded to search for the cave in which they had previously found refuge. It was speedily discovered, and, fortunately for the fugitives, was on this occasion tenanted by two of the contrabandista.

The fugitives were thoroughly exhausted, the tension of the last few hours had produced in each a condition bordering on collapse, and but for the prompt administration by their generous hosts of some smuggled *aguardienté* the results might have proved fatal. One or two sips of the spirit put new life into them, and soon all four were puffing away at their *cigarillos*. After a short rest, the two outlaws agreed to guide them across the mountain range through a defile known only to the smugglers.

Before the day had far advanced, long ere the sun had climbed to the zenith, Silva and his devoted Mariquita were safe from all pursuit on French territory.

Hearing the sharp clatter of horse's hoofs behind her, she turned in terror.

Here they had the great desire of their hearts gratified, for the curé of the parish where they took up their abode made them indissolubly one; and, in due time, as the years rolled on, their happiness was crowned, when young children gathered round their knees.

They never again, during all the years of their lives, entered the Republic which had given them birth, and had been the home of their earlier years; nor did they ever think of the fête day at Iotara without a shudder.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

All Readers are Asked to Submit Photographs Suitable for These Pages, Accompanied by a Short Description.
Payment is Made for All Accepted Pictures.

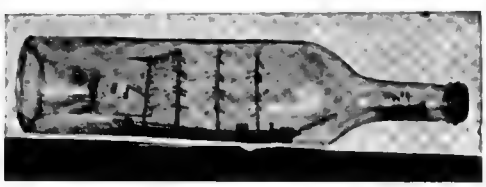
A SHIP IN A BOTTLE.

MANY people have seen apples growing in bottles, the necks of which are too narrow for the fruit to be withdrawn.

These curiosities are easily obtained, the bottles being passed over a branch of an apple-tree with blossom on it. When the blossom turns to fruit, the fruit gradually gets larger, and finally too large to be withdrawn from the bottle without breaking the glass.

Clearly this procedure has not been followed in the case of this ship, which appears far too large to pass through the neck of the bottle which surrounds it.

The question naturally arises: How did it get into its present position?



An ornament such as this is frequently seen in cottage windows in Newfoundland. How is the ship got into the bottle?

To put it there requires considerable patience, and much practice. It is useless for the clumsy to attempt such a task. It will be noticed that between the masts of the ship are what appear to be little spots. These are in reality beads, which have a string running through them.

The little vessel is quite flat when pushed into the bottle. The masts lie parallel with the deck, so that the whole ship passes easily through the narrow neck.

When it is safely inside, the string running through the beads is pulled, and this causes the masts to assume their natural position.

In the neck of the bottle illustrated a little black tug will be noticed. This is supposed to be pulling the three-master along.

Sailors are extremely clever at making models, and frequently turn out beautiful miniature vessels during their spare time. This is most often the case on sailing vessels, whose crews have more time at their disposal than steamer hands.

Washing handkerchiefs. The two students on the left are folding up the newly-washed linen and taking it away in clothes-baskets.

WASHING AS A FINE ART.

IN Columbus, Ohio, Madame Marie Cortleau has a school of physical culture where "washing as a fine art" is taught to twenty-nine pretty Society girls, to develop their muscles, dispel wrinkles, and freshen their complexions.

Fräulein Gluck is the second in command of this school, whose students are very wealthy.

An important exercise is to develop the muscles of the neck, back, and shoulders, and consists in lifting pails of water from the floor and filling the tubs.

This must be done without bending the knees or losing balance. The movement is repeated six times. Then the washing proper begins.

Sheet-shaking is also practised, and the sheets must be shaken till they are without a wrinkle. Sheets are not allowed to be ironed.

Low-necked, short-sleeved dresses are worn, so as to provide a cheap steaming for the skin.

The rules at this washing academy are very strict, and are enforced with Draconian severity. No shirking is permitted, and millionaires' daughters are obliged to labour like professional washerwomen.

Sheet-shaking is a most important exercise. The sheets must be shaken till they are without a wrinkle. They are not allowed to be ironed.

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AN EARLY SEWING MACHINE.

THIS quaint machine, which now reposes in the South Kensington Museum, was constructed in 1842 by a native of Snowshill, near Eversham.

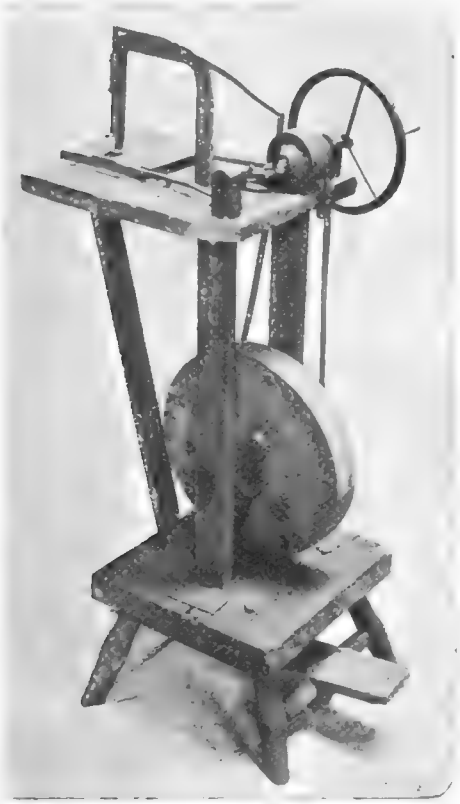
The machine is driven by the treadle which is to be seen beneath the four-legged wooden stool which supports the whole mechanism.

When this pedal is worked the b'g fly-wheel revolves, and by means of a belt sets the machinery on the upper part of the contrivance in motion.

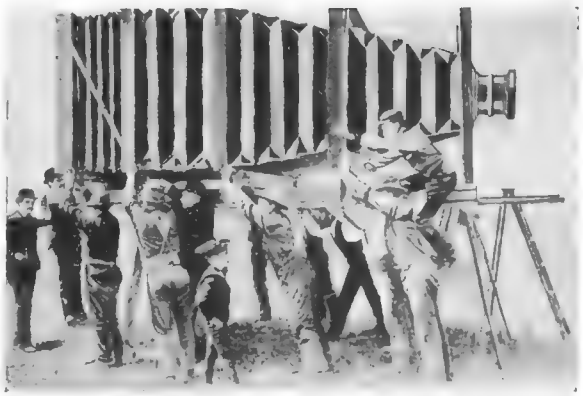
A crank in the spindle communicates a vertical reciprocating motion to the needle-bar by means of a long rocking lever.

Unfortunately, both the needle and shuttle are missing, and so it is not known what these two parts were like.

The machine is very roughly made throughout, the inventor apparently having taken little trouble when constructing it.



A primitive sewing machine, made in 1842, and now in the South Kensington Museum.



By permission of *The New York American.*

An enormous camera which takes a plate 8ft. by 4½ft., and requires fifteen men to work it.

THE BIGGEST CAMERA ON EARTH.

As might be expected, this colossal camera hails from the United States. It is used for photographing railway trains, and scenery through which they pass.

Twelve months were required to construct this camera, and six of them were necessary for the delicate process of grinding, testing, and polishing the huge lens. This operation required the greatest skill, since a variation of 1-5000 of an inch would have proved fatal to the optical perfection of the lens.

The camera was made by Mr. J. A. Anderson, of Chicago, and is built of cherry wood. The bellows is made of heavy rubber, and 150 feet of rubber sheeting were used in its construction. This bellows is divided into four sections, and between each is a supporting frame, mounted on small wheels which run on a steel rail.

The weight of the camera is 1000lb., and the plate holder when loaded scales another 500lb.

The plates are the largest ever manufactured, and were made to order by a St. Louis dry plate company. They had to be coated with sensitised emulsion entirely by hand, and cost about £5 each. To develop one of them five gallons of developer are required, and the presence of six men in the dark room.

A finished picture costs from £6 to £7.

Some idea of the enormous size of this gigantic camera may be gathered when it is stated that the photographer can go inside it and walk about.

The negative obtained with it is more than three times larger than any previous photograph ever made on a single plate.

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NEW ZEALAND'S NATURAL HOT BATHS.

WITHIN a similar area there is no country in the world that offers such a variety of curious conditions and interesting phenomena as New Zealand; and even in that land of Alpine peaks, volcanoes, icy sounds, and boiling lakes there is no spot more full of attraction than the thermal centre, where the scene in our illustration is situated.

Twenty years ago this scene did not exist, and its place was occupied by the then famous White Terraces, beautiful natural banks of pure silica, so fantastic and symmetrical in formation as to excite general wonder and admiration.

In 1886 there occurred a violent earthquake, which cleft the mountain of Tarawera, and altered the whole physical face of the district. Valleys appeared where hills had been, and both the White and Pink Terraces, in all their fairylike beauty, were engulfed.

The boiling lake of Rotomahana was born in those tumultuous moments, and with it the hot baths of the White Terraces, which have since become world-famed, not only for the unique picturesqueness of their surroundings, but for their marvellous curative properties, which have restored health and vigour to many whose cases had been considered hopeless by the greatest doctors of the day.

Although the seismic disturbance of 1866 created such havoc in what was a most beautiful district, yet the very disorder it has left behind is not without a peculiar picturesqueness of its own.

The rugged irregularities of the destroyed White Terraces possess a certain grandeur that is not lost on even the most casual of visitors.

Photo *R. A. R. Bennett.*

This is not the portico of a Greek Temple, but a photograph taken from the side buttress of the porch of a London street, showing the pillars of similar porches all down the street.

A GREEK TEMPLE?

THIS illustration resembles a view of some ancient Temple in Greece; but, as a matter of fact, it is something very much more commonplace.

Everybody has seen, in London and other cities, streets of houses with massive porches supported on pillars. A flight of steps generally leads up to each of these porches.

This picture was obtained by resting a hand camera on the side buttress of one of these porches in a London street. What looks like a cloister is merely the porches of the adjoining houses receding in perspective.

Scarcely one person in ten would be able to say, on looking at the picture, what it really represents.

Two individuals enjoying a free bath in one of the natural hot lakes of New Zealand.

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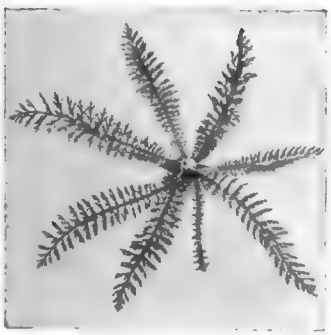
VEGETABLE STAR-FISH.

Some Graceful Common Plants which are . . Shaped like Stars. . .



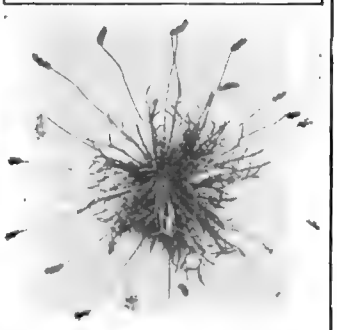
YARROW.—The Common Yarrow (*Achillea*) is named after Achilles, and has the power of healing wounds. It flowers from June to September.

SHEPHERD'S PURSE.—Shepherd's Purse (*C. Bursa pastoris*) is a common weed, found almost throughout the world. It is an annual, and flowers nearly the whole year round.

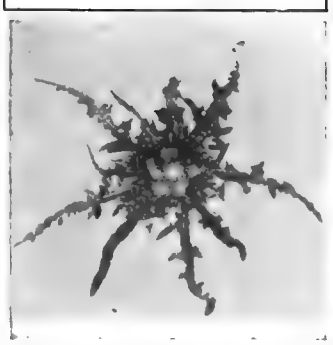
HAWK-BIT.—The Hawk-bit (*Apargia hispida*) flowers from June to September in meadows and waste places. It has lobed leaves, and bears a yellow flower.

SORREL.—Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) grows extensively in meadows during June and July. It has juicy stems and an acid taste.

HEDGE-MUSTARD.—Hedge-Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*) grows in waste places and on roadsides in June and July. It has a small yellow flower.



BUCK'S HORN PLANTAIN.—The Buck's Horn Plantain puts forth its curved flower-spikes so regularly that it might serve as a model for decorative work.



MARSH THISTLE.—The Marsh Thistle when dwarfed by poor soil produces its flowers before the stem is grown, and forms a beautiful rosette.

CUDWEED.—The only British species, Mountain Cudweed (*Antennaria dioica*), flowers in July and August on mountain heaths.

SPEAR THISTLE.—The Spear Thistle is so-called from the shape of its leaves which resemble spears. Like the Marsh Thistle, it forms a rosette when dwarfed by poor soil.

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Little Billy's First.

The Story of a Cigar Smoker, in Six Spasms.

By Erroll Stanhope.

After all, it is the first that's the worst, and this is my first, and I think it is jolly nice, if you want to know anything.

I like it—and, what's more, I intend to continue now I've started, too. H'm, of course a brandy and soda would be great just now—but I daren't take one, I suppose. I wonder if old Fagg is about. Even if he isn't, the cupboard is locked, and he's got the key of the cellar. Awful rot, I call it. *I* ought to have keys of the cellars like the eldest son in other houses. 'Pon my honour, it's no catch being an heir when your father says you're "too young" and your mother kisses you in front of other chaps and calls you Billy. Good sort, the Mater—oh! one of the best, but a bit dotty now and then. *Billy* is all right for a *kid*, but I don't like it when a feller's old, you know, to shout: "Billy, come here, darling, the grass is wet"; rotten bad form *I* call it.

This is my first, and I think it is jolly nice.

Of course, now that I've proved to the governor that I'm grown up, and able to do as I like (as I am now doing), he'll be the first man to recognise me, I'm sure, because he's awfully decent *for* a pater, you know, only he's a bit lop-sided over boys. He thinks you're a boy for ever, and that's howling rotten when a chap's eleven last May.

I think I shall be a major in the Scots Greys.

I shall tell him that *now* it isn't much good my going to school any more, because, 'pon my word, I think I've learnt everything there is except German, and I hate German. I told the governor so, and he said he'd box my ears. He must be told not to say that again, by the by, because it sounds awfully rotten.

But then, of course, he *won't*, now.

Yes, school's settled. I shan't do any more of that, so I suppose I'd better go into business of some kind, unless I go to Oxford for a couple of years, just to get in the "know." Meet some rather decent chaps at Oxford, though *they're* not what they used to be by a long chalk, I'm told. Should hate to know bounders, because bounders would be sure to crowd on you; they love an heir, bounders do.

No, I think I'll go straight into the Army, that's about my mark. There are really very few professions open to decent men nowadays; everything has become so vulgar and rotten, that it's hardly good enough to belong to the Scots Greys. I suppose, though, being a member of the Turf Club still helps a chap—because, of course, I shall belong to that. I think I shall be a major in the Scots Greys, I like the uniform rather. I wonder why my hand shakes; is it because I'm delicate? No, I shan't try the Army; I'll have a yacht, and go fishing for years. Yes, that's what I'll do—have a steam yacht as big as that one I bought on a picture post-card, all white, with guns on it, and I'll go round the world in her. That's it; ripping! And maybe we might see a bit of fighting off China. You never know your luck.

It's gone very dark, by the by.

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Of course the Mater will kick up the dickens as usual, but she must be made to understand what bad form it is to show your feelings in public, and, after all, she ought to be proud to have a son who will make such a name in the world. It isn't often heirs do that.

I don't know if I'd like a Garter, or a statue of myself in Trafalgar Square, like Nelson, or —it's gone very dark, by the by, and yet the sun is still shining. What I mean is nobody takes any notice of me, and I try and try to do my best, but they never seem to encourage me at all.

All my inside is turning over.

I suppose it will go on to the end like that. I do feel queer in my head. I suppose it's studying so hard. Your parents never consider if you're strong enough to work; you're driven out to school all the same. I *felt* I wasn't fit to go this morning when I got up and found it was raining, but a lot *they* cared.

Now I suppose I shall be ill through their carelessness.

Oh, I do feel bad, all my inside is turning over, and I've had scarcely a thing to eat. I wonder if those tarts I had with the winkles weren't good. Perhaps they bought cheap ones; *they* wouldn't care, anything is good enough for a wretched boy. I wonder how any of us live, I do really. I don't think I shall live myself, the room's going round now. . .

Oh, dear, oh, dear, I'm sure I shall die! Oh, I wish someone would come and bring a light! Oh, I do f—feel so bad, I do, oh, I do!

No one will come here to find me because I'm in the spare room, and I suppose I'll die all alone without a creature near me (tears). Oh, mamma, mamma! and I may lie here all dead and smelly for weeks before anyone gets to know! Perhaps it will be years, p—perhaps I'll never be f—found at all" (more tears).

And then, hundreds of years after, they'll come across a little h—heap of dust and oh! oh! I'm dying—good-bye everybody, and Aunt Gina is to have my white rat and I'm only a poor little—mamma!

I'm dying—good-bye everybody, and Aunt Gina is to have my whi e rat.

Oh, oh, why did I choose one of those long, black ones when I might have had a dear little pale yellow *Flor de Splendidero?* Why doesn't father lock up his cigars?

And little Billy staggered totteringly away, leaving on the sill of the open window the larger half of a very strong cigar.

AN UNWELCOME ATTENTION.

She squeezed my hand . . . but let no
other maid
Too freely criticise, or reprimand
The "forwardness" this "brazen minx"
displayed;
For one can easily misunderstand.

I'd made no overtures, I grant you, and
Felt no delight; in fact, was quite
dismayed;
Yet wrath was stifled, and my smile was
bland.

I'd followed silently, in ambuscade:
She knew it not; her act was all
unplanned.
The slamming door, though, I could not
evade . . .
She squeezed my hand!

Leslie Thomas.

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I'm Mr. X, the Specialist
For 'Hump' in all its stages:
The only thing my patients have
To do 's to read my pages—
So, start at the beginning,
And half-way through you'll find
All your little worries
Left a mile behind.
All your little worries
Left behind a mile—
Read on to the finish,
And you'll finish with a smile.

Puzzle Penknives or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X" and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

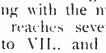
A WATCH TRICK.

Tell someone that he may think of any number on the face of his watch (which should be produced), and that you will know it.

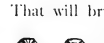
When he has mentally selected one of the numbers, "Now," you say to him, "point out any other number." He does so. Let us suppose he points out V.

To this you add twelve (making seventeen), and tell him to count backwards *i.e.* against the time—starting from the figure V, and beginning with the number he thought of until he reaches seventeen. That will bring him to VII., and that will be the number he thought of.

Take another case. He thinks of I, and points out VI. You add 12 = 18. Tell him to start at VI., beginning with the number he thought of, and count backward till he reaches 18. That will bring him to I – his number.



Q. Why is the letter "L" like a priceless jewel?
A Because it is invaluable (in "valuable").



HORRIBLE ACCIDENT.

FREDERICK: "I say, a chap I know ran smack into a train yesterday."

RICHARD: "You mean that the train ran into him, I suppose. How dreadful! Was he killed?"

FREDERICK: "I don't mean anything of the sort. He ran into the train through the door of a compartment and sat down. Killed! of course not!"

AN **A B C** TELEGRAM.

This is the kind of telegram that cheers "Mr. X's" heart—sent him by a soldier reader:

A British **C**olony **D**epends **E**ntirely **F**or **G**ood, **H**onest, **I**rresistible **J**okes, **K**eenly **L**aughable, **M**ostly **N**ew, **O**n Pearson's **Q**uint **R**OYAL. **S**end **T**he **U**sual **V**olum- **W**i h "**X**'s" Yarns.

Zululand.

IMPOSSIBLE.

BROWNE: "I bet you can't tell me why Moses could not have smoked in the ark?"

GREENE: "Obvious. He had no tobacco."

BROWNE: "No."

GREENE: "Well, then, he had not a pipe."

BROWNE: "No."

GREENE: "He had no matches."

BROWNE: "No. Give it up?"

GREENE: "Yes."

BROWNE: "When was *Moses* in the ark?"

A SIMPLE METHOD.

JACK: "I say, Diamond & Co., the jewellers, are jolly enterprising."

JAMES: "Why; what have they done now?"

JACK: "If you just sign a piece of paper they give you a £2 bracelet and watch."

JAMES: "No!"

JACK: "Yes—a cheque."

NOT SO EASY.

Which is the larger, a square half inch or half an inch square?

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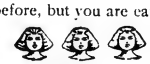
Contradictory.

A correspondent assures "Mr. X" that a Mr. Jones bet a Mr. Smith that he (Jones) would get to the railway station first more often in the week than would Mr. Smith.

Jones won easily on Monday and Tuesday; on Wednesday and Thursday he only just won: on Friday he got there by inches only; and on Saturday Smith beat him.

Then (according to "Mr. X's" correspondent) Jones said: "Good-morning, Smith. You are first at last. You used to be behind before, but you are early of late."

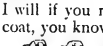


Necessary.

Druce: "You've got something on your back, old chap."

Black: "Have I? Take it off, will you?"

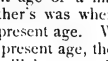
Druce: "I will if you really want me to. But it's your coat, you know."



A Problem.

The present age of a man is four times what his brother's was when his sister was his brother's present age. When the brother is the sister's present age, the combined ages of the three will be 120. The total of the three is 90 years.

What is the present age of each?



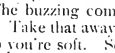
That Dizzy Feeling.

Kay: "I've got such a buzzing in my ears."

Hay: "That proves you've got water on the brain."

Kay: "Good gracious! Why?"

Hay: "The buzzing comes from the B in your *Brain*. Take that away, and there's only *rain* left; so you're soft. See?"



An Impossible Trap.

Say to your sharpest friend: "I bet you five bob you will not jump over this stick" (any stick will do) "if I lay it on the floor."

"Some trick?" he will say.

"No trick, at all," you reply. "I merely lay it on the floor, and if you jump over it you win five bob."

Having induced him to accept, you lay the stick on the floor *against the wall* of the room and collect five silver shillings.

Think Before You Speak.

Binks: "Have you ever seen a bun dance?"

Curtis: "No."

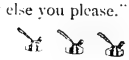
Binks: "Have you seen a heavy fall of snow?"

Curtis: "Yes. What's that got to do with it?"

Binks: "Why, you must have seen a bun dance, then."

Curtis: "You must be mad."

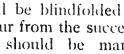
Binks: "Not a bit—abundance of snow or anything else you please."



Grapes.

Out of the letters contained in the word "Grapes" "Mr. X" has made forty-two words, no plurals or proper names. For combinations of only six letters this is fairly good; but can any of "Mr. X's" readers do better? "Mr. X" offers two puzzle penknives and two packs of playing-cards by way of encouragement. If more than four tie at the same number the Editor of The Royal shall be blindfolded and begged to pick out four from the successful ones.

Answers should be marked "Grapes," addressed "Mr. X," care of The Royal Magazine, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and reach him by January 25th.

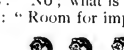


The Mysterious Room.

Alfonso: "Do you know that there is a room which no one has ever been inside, yet which everybody has spoken of at one time or another? It existed in the earliest times and it will never disappear."

François: "No; what is it?"

Alfonso: "Room for improvement."



Beware of Chestnuts.

Star: "I say, when is a door not a door?"

Moon: "Oh, my dear chap, that's absolutely the first riddle ever made. When it's a jar (ajar), of course."

Star: "Just where you're wrong, my lad. When it's a negress (an egress), of course."

ANSWERS.

Not so Easy.—Half an inch square.

A Problem.—20, 30 and 40.

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Real Life Romances.

If You Have Ever Experienced or Witnessed some Remarkable Adventure, Send us a Description of it Five Hundred Words in Length. Liberal Payment is Made for Accepted Contributions, which Must Be True.

A Long Journey.

THE ROMANCE OF A NEW YORK NEWSBOY.

FRANK RAMSAY, a little New York newsboy of nine years old, became possessed of the desire to see the ruins wrought by the earthquake and fire at San Francisco. This little "newsie," at his work in New York at the time, read every word about the disaster, and was especially interested in the fires, and on the 19th of April he set out to see for himself the havoc and ruin they had wrought, the fact that San Francisco was such a great distance away from New York not deterring him. He had only enough money to take him a short distance, so had to work his way, and he worked it entirely across the continent, in the face of hardships which would have discouraged many three times his age.

His story had become known to conductors and brakesmen on trains, and they had helped him along

He went to Buffalo and sold papers in the streets there, but could not make enough money to purchase a ticket to the next town. This discouraged him, and he was about to give up, when he met a railway guard, to whom he told his story. The man was interested enough to help him, and in the guard's van of the goods train he took the first part of his journey. He reached Kansas City, but there fell into the hands of the police, who returned him to Buffalo. He then retraced his steps to his native State, but he did not mean to stay there, for he had no sooner arrived than he began to make plans for another try for his goal. He started out again, and the slight knowledge gained on his former journey helped him. He was taken in by the guard of a goods train again, and passed along from guard to guard, until after going five hundred miles he again met with failure, and was turned back, this time being sent to New York. He still persevered, however, and made a third trial, and, profiting by his former experiences, made his way successfully right across the continent as far as Los Angeles. His story had become known to conductors and brakesmen on the trains. They helped him along, and at Los Angeles these large-hearted men made up a purse, and purchased a ticket which took him to San Francisco on Friday, September 7th, after a long and arduous journey of four months and nineteen days.

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The Story of the Trevet Basin, Wyoming.

A FRONTIERSMAN'S ROMANCE.

SILENTLY, persistently, snow is falling over the Laramie Foothills, hiding the outline of the great, jagged rocks; filling up the rifts and crannies in the dykes; smoothing over everything in its own remorseless fashion. Down in the Trevet Basin the creek is almost obliterated by the snow upon the willows lining its banks; the ground already is covered a foot deep; only the dark side of a small trapper's cabin in the centre stands out in strong relief against the whiteness around.

Across the creek and up the steep, rough hill to the south goes the trail; and here, on this snow-darkened December morning, a wild tragedy is being enacted, with no spectators save the sombre, silent rocks around.

A man and a bear are facing each other, only a few paces between them. Clotted blood is clinging to the fur and dripping fast from a mortal wound in the bear's shaggy side; its lips are drawn tightly back from the cruel, threatening teeth, its back is arched, and its head down in preparation for the charge it has just sufficient strength to make.

Erect and steady, his back against the rocky wall, the man grasps his rifle by the barrel, and stands waiting.

Warfare with men and brutes has long been his pastime and means of livelihood; but now the trusty rifle he loves as if it were a child, and which bears many notches upon its stock, each commemorating the death of some savage warrior, has failed him in this hour of need—a cartridge has jammed.

Erect and steady . . . the man grasps his rifle, and stands waiting.

In an hour the snow has hidden it all; has covered everything up; the blood-stained trail, the trampled snow, the stiffened heap where man and brute struggled and gasped out their lives together.

* *

The land in the Basin is farmed by a settler from the East, and presently children's voices wake the echoes lurking in the old granite ridges around it.

One bright morning in the early spring of '90, children's wandering footsteps bring them to that lonely, forsaken hollow, and wide-open, wondering eyes gaze for the first time upon the sad tokens there.

The story of "Old Trevet's" disappearance had lingered about the hills; the old, notched rifle lying amid the mingled bones and with the cartridge yet jamming the breech tell the rest; to-day there is a small, rough tombstone bearing this inscription:

"Here lie the remains of John Trevet, who was killed while hunting during the winter of '70-71, and whose bones were found April 2nd, 1890."

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A Strange Romance.

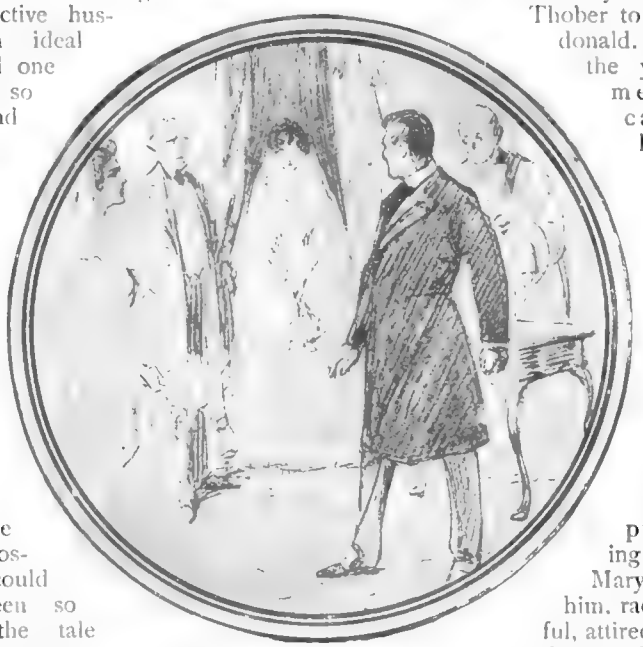
THE STORY OF A DESERTED BRIDE.

THIS story rang through the length and breadth of the United States about the middle of last September.

Those mainly concerned are Miss Mary Macdonald, a beautiful Brooklyn girl of eighteen, and Hugo Thober, who lives in Newark, New Jersey. His age is twenty-two.

With two such characters the second step in this romance is not difficult to foretell. They were engaged. Their friends expressed the opinion that both were equally fortunate—Miss Macdonald in having for her prospective husband such an ideal young man and one possessed of so much means; and Hugo Thober in having secured one of the most charming and beautiful girls in Brooklyn.

They had only been engaged some months when by chance a strange rumour came to the girl's ears. Could it be true? Was it possible that Hugo could really have been so cruel? Yet the tale haunted her every moment of the day, and even at night she could not drive it from her thoughts. Down in Jersey City, the place that was to be her future home, could it be that there lived a girl whom Hugo had once sworn to make his bride? What a thought to have of a man who within a week was destined to become her husband!



Behind the curtain stood the baker's pretty daughter—also attired in a wedding-dress.

Inquiry, quietly but surely pursued by her father in Jersey City, revealed the cruel rumour to be only too true. Hugo Thober had discarded the baker's pretty daughter in order to wed the beautiful Brooklyn girl. This Mr. Macdonald told in grieved words to his weeping daughter.

But not for long did Mary Macdonald sorrow. It was not that her parents and her brother declared that Thober was unworthy ever to have dared to hope to become her husband; it was not that which caused a sudden calm to replace her anguish. A great resolve had crept into her thoughts. Hugo Thober, mean and contemptible as his action had been, should never break the heart of the poor girl in Jersey City. In measured words that plainly told a tale of pent-up grief, the Brooklyn girl unfolded her plan to her father.

* * * * *

It was the Saturday before the Sunday on which everyone expected Hugo Thober to wed Mary Macdonald. For several days the young Newark merchant had called at the house, and had been received without the slightest indication that his secret was known. But on that Saturday when he called to see how the preparations for his wedding were progressing a great surprise was awaiting him.

Mary Macdonald met him, radiant and beautiful, attired in her wedding dress. Her father and brother entered the room, and the pretty bride quietly retired. Certain unexpected family circumstances had occurred, the father explained to Thober, which made it absolutely imperative that the marriage should take place without delay. Thereupon a minister was summoned, and an improvised desk arranged.

Suddenly the bride's father stepped forward and with a sudden jerk threw back a pair of curtains. Behind the curtains stood the baker's pretty daughter—also attired in a wedding dress.

"Let the ceremony proceed," said the father, placing the Jersey City girl at Thober's side.

As in a dream, he heard himself bound unalterably to the girl whom he had forsaken.

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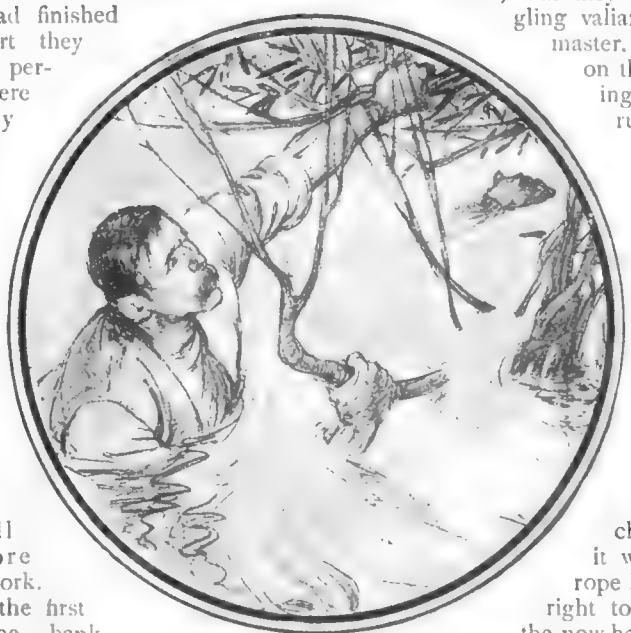
A Dumb Hero.

THE ROMANCE OF A GALLANT BULLDOG.

THE scene was peaceful enough, giving no warning of the thrilling incident which was about to happen.

The broad expanse of river, prevented for the time being from pursuing its usual course by the damstones, was sparkling wonderfully in the fierce glare of the sun. Two men were at work on the other side of the dam, loading sand from the river bed into carts. So engrossed were they in their occupation, that they did not notice the river was rising rapidly, and that in some places it was already flowing over the dam.

When they had finished loading the cart they looked up and perceived that they were surrounded by water on all sides. Still there was nothing seriously alarming in that, for the bank was not fifty yards distant, and nowhere was the water more than a foot in depth. So they sent the cart off, intending to fill another before finishing their work.



It was seen that the rope had been carried right to the spot where the now half-drowned sand-digger was clinging.

Scarcely had the first cart reached the bank, when with a roar and a rush a mighty wave of water, as if lifted by some powerful, unseen energy, rose above the top of the dam, and bore it down. One of the men who possessed but one arm, but who was a powerful swimmer, was swept off his feet, but by dint of superhuman exertions managed to gain the bank and clamber into safety. The other, at first warning, clutched grimly at a growing willow bush, and held on for dear life, whilst the water surged furiously around him as high as his chest. Crowds of people assembled on the river bank, and witnessed his serious predicament; but there seemed no possible way of helping him.

Swimmers from the nearest bank, with ropes round their waists, tried to reach him, but in vain; the current was now too deep and strong.

Then it was that a noble bulldog, owned by a carrier in the town, came to the rescue. He was taken about a hundred yards further up the river on the top side of the dam, and a long, stout rope was secured to his collar. His master on the opposite bank whistled his favourite call, and without an instant's delay the faithful animal plunged into the seething current.

He had no chance of reaching the other side, that they knew, but struggling valiantly to reach his master. Prince seemed on the point of landing, when with a rush he was swept furiously over the damstones, seemingly to be battered to death But no, he rose, still struggling persistently, and was making valiant efforts to reach the low side of the bank.

He did, and a cheer arose when it was seen that the rope had been carried right to the spot where the now half-drowned sand-digger was clinging. With straining eyes the crowd saw him secure the rope and tie it round his waist. A dozen brawny arms seized the other end, and with a long pull and a strong pull he was hauled swiftly ashore, more dead than alive.

A subscription was raised after, and a silver collar bought for the noble dog in commemoration of its gallant services.

Not the least willing contribution was that of the man for whose sake the brave animal had risked its life.

The remarkable swimming powers of dogs have frequently excited surprise and admiration from witnesses of their aquatic prowess. Their bodies offer little resistance to the water, and this explains many swims achieved by dogs.

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Greater Love Hath No Man.

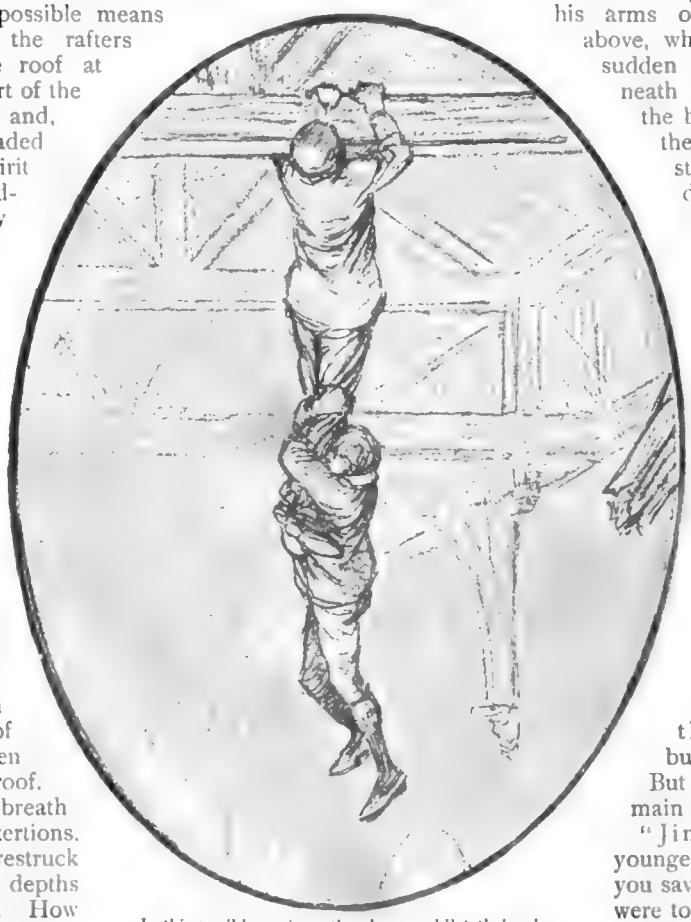
THE STORY OF A SHROPSHIRE BOY'S SACRIFICE.

ONE summer's day some years ago two boys might have been seen entering the church of St. Leonard in the little market town of Bridgnorth in Shropshire.

Possessed with that spirit of mischief which characterises boys of all ages and nationalities, they are bent on a dangerous errand. One of the lads has discovered a possible means of access to the rafters that span the roof at the highest part of the old church, and, having persuaded a kindred spirit to share the adventure, they are soon engaged in their perilous work.

Sturdy and fearless, and practised climbers as they are, they have need of all their skill now; but good fortune attends their efforts, and they are soon astride one of the great oaken beams of the roof.

Pausing for breath after their exertions, they gaze awestruck into the vast depths beneath them. How their schoolfellows will envy them!



In this terrible position they hang, whilst their cries for help resound through the building.

But they must leave some trace of their exploit behind, and the elder lad suggests carving their names upon the beam which supports them! The other boy demurs. Carve their names by all means, but let it be in a more exalted position than this! Higher up, on the loftiest beam of all!

So they clamber higher, ignoring the ominous creaking of the ancient rafters protesting against the burden of these intruders!

The beam they aspire to is more difficult to reach than they anticipated, and necessitates a spring on the part of the elder boy, who is leading, in order to gain it.

The strain caused by the extra effort is more than the old timber can stand. The first lad has barely time to fling his arms over the rafter above, when there is a sudden snapping beneath their feet, and the beam on which they had been standing topples down into the depths below! The other lad, feeling himself falling, catches at the only support within his reach—his comrade's dangling legs!

In this terrible position they hang, whilst their cries for help resound through the building.

But the cries remain unheard.

"Jim," says the younger boy, "could you save yourself if I were to let go?"

"Yes," replies Jim. "But you mustn't."

But the younger one's mind is made up.

Exclaiming "Good-bye, Jim; say good-bye to mother for me," he relaxes his grip and hurtles through the air. There is a dull thud, a groan, and then silence.

* * * * *

Hours afterwards men came and rescued the heart-broken Jim, and reverently bore away the corpse of his friend.

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A New Art For The Home

A Novel Scheme for the Decoration of Screens and Other Articles.

By F. E. Baily.

A partly-finished screen, showing the method of making the background.

Nowadays there is scarcely one of us who has not fallen a victim to the picture postcard craze, and we all receive these more or less artistic tokens of affectionate remembrance from friends who are spending their holidays in places remote from us with philosophic resignation. The legends that these cards bear are laconic; frequently they consist, as a writer recently put it, merely of a cross on the sky-line, and the words: "This is where we are staying; you can't see the house."

Some people collect picture postcards, and fill fat albums with the tribute levied upon their friends, in much the same spirit as that which moved the Red Indian, in the bad old days, to collect scalps. His hobby had a redeeming feature: he collected only the tresses of his enemies. The modern postcard collector has not even this point in his favour, since *he* victimises his friends.

The same screen completed. It will be noticed that several series of postcards are used in this design.

It has been left for Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, who practically introduced the picture postcard into this country, to suggest a rational use for the cards with which kind friends bombard one. By following their instructions the postcard collector not only stands a chance of winning one of the £1330 worth of prizes offered by this enterprising firm for household articles decorated with postcards published by them, but, even if unsuccessful in this respect, engages in a charming occupation for winter evenings, enabling him, or her, to construct screens, flower-pot stands, plaques, panels, cupboards, etc., which are really works of art.

It was the writer's privilege to inspect numerous articles of this description which had been decorated with picture postcards

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A rose as it appears on the postcard.

by the talented lady artists who design much of the work published by Messrs. Tuck, and he was literally astonished at the beautiful results they 'tained with the help of a little glue, some picture postcards, a pair of scissors, and much good taste.

The same rose cut out so as to be arranged in festoons, etc.

To accomplish the decoration of a screen such as the one depicted in our illustrations, it is first necessary to obtain the white-wood frame on which the postcards are presently to be stuck. This can be purchased from any fancy goods repository. And here, by the by, it will be as well to give a word of warning; glue is the only adhesive which is of the least use in screen decorating, and those who employ gum will be rewarded by seeing all the corners of the cards they have stuck on their screen rise up in judgment against them.

First of all, prepare your background. It must be understood that a modern postcard screen is not made in the haphazard fashion that was good enough for those composed of old Christmas cards, etc., which delighted us in our nursery days. The background is usually made entirely of one series of cards, with the pictures cut out. That of the screen illustrated consists of a series of copper-tinted cards with embossed figures at one end of them. These figures have been cut off, and the remainder of the cards used as a background; subsequently, the figures have been utilised in places to form a border.

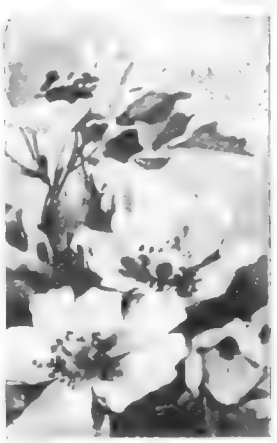
When the background has been completed, that portion of the work which requires an artistic eye and delicate taste begins. In the case of the screen we are discussing, the artist has cut out the flowers from a series of cards illustrating various roses, and has arranged them in a cluster at the head of one panel.

The centre of this panel is composed of an oval in which are grouped four of a series of six beautiful heads by Asti. Surrounded by its dull copper background, this oval presents a most beautiful appearance.

The other panels are decorated with flowers cut out from various series of flower postcards. The added effect gained by cutting out the blossoms, and sticking them in clusters and festoons on a background composed of other cards, cannot be insisted upon too strongly. In this amalgamation of the best points of various cards lies the whole secret of postcard decoration.

The remainder of the cards when the flower, head, or other design has been cut out, should not be thrown away. It may be employed to form a background for some other article, or in the construction of borders, and in many ways.

When the screen has been completed, that is, so far as sticking on the cards is concerned, the whole should be coated with a good copal varnish. Before this is done, however, the screen ought to be cleaned where necessary, since even the most careful worker is apt to leave finger marks and other blemishes which mark his triumphal progress from the top of his



A single or dog-rose in the same series.

The dog-rose cut out. It can be grouped or arranged in a vase after this has been done.

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The Dutch scenes of the series from which these cards are taken show to great advantage when cut out and arranged separately on a screen or other article. The rest of the card, after the figures are removed, may be used as a background for some other design.

screen to the foot, or the foot to the top, as the case may be.

The Dutch series of postcards whose designs are illustrated above can be recommended to the screen-maker who wishes for simple bucolic effects. There is also a blue china series with which charming designs reminiscent of willow-pattern plates may be constructed.

The reader who has any artistic gift may create for him or herself any number of really beautiful articles, such as would, as the furniture advertisements say, "prove an ornament to any home." No one looking at a picture postcard screen would guess how it was made. It looks as if it had been painted by some talented artist.

An Asti postcard, before and after the head has been cut out. This head and its companions have been used in making the screen on page 249.

The greatest care should be exercised in postcard decoration, for neatness is absolutely essential to successful, or even decently presentable work.

Nothing is more distasteful to the critical spectator than postcards which have been too lavishly besmeared with glue, and consequently present a blurred appearance on the outside, caused by the surplus glue, which has flowed over the edges when the card was pressed on to the screen.

Again, when cutting out heads, flowers, or animals from their surrounding background, use a small pair of scissors and be careful not to mutilate the petals of the flowers, or the limbs of the animals.

These little details may appear trivial, but they are not.

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A PEAL OF BELLS.

A Story . of Two . Marriages.

By Chris Sewell.

'Do 'ee 'ear them bells, me gel? Lor'! *don't* 'em clang?"

"Seems likely as they worrit 'ee, mother, seein' 'tis the third time 'ee've spoke of 'em?"

Mrs. Frampton did not reply, but she threw a quick, penetrating glance in her daughter's direction, as if she detected something unusual in the tone of her voice.

"'Ave 'ee 'eard tell what 'em be clanging *fur?* 'Pears so by the seem of 'ee," she observed, not without a suggestion of maliciousness.

It was a question she had been aching to put since the belfry tower had suddenly burst into melody two hours previously; but though a courageous woman for the most part, she had always stood a trifle in awe of her only child.

Now, however, that the reserved, self-contained Unity had been betrayed into something like irritation, she felt bold.

"I understand," said the girl quietly—but the colour surged up into her face and receded, leaving it very white; "I understand 'tis on account o' Paul Webber's marriage, which takes place in Lunnon to-day. The folks were anxious to show their good feelin' for all 'e did at the Croft Farm fire, an' passon 'e sent 'em down leave to give 'im a peal."

Struggle as she would, Unity could not keep her voice at its ordinary level pitch throughout the sentence. A trembling pathos, which the girl herself did not realise, went straight to her mother's heart, and melted that worthy lady entirely.

"An' a sinful shame 'tis," she burst out wrathfully; "an' 'tis no good for 'e to look knives at me like that, me gel, for I've corked it up an' corked it up the whole o' this blessed marnin' till I feel like the new wine in the owld bottles wot passon told us of last Sunday. To think as that there Paul should ha' dangled around you since you wore pinnies, only to give you the go-by directly 'e settles in Lunnon, spreading abroad, mind, that 'e only left the village to make a fortune an' a better 'ome for 'ee."

"Hush! mother, do hush!" intreated the girl in a low, pained voice; "I s'pose folks knows their own business best."

"I s'pose they do," said Mrs. Frampton furiously. "Same time, if 'e brings 'is precious wife 'ere, I'll give 'em both a piece o' my mind, so I will, as sure as my name's Louisa Frampton."

"What good 'll that do?" Unity asked sadly; "'sides, we've got our pride, haven't us? 'Twould 'pear if you took 'un to task, or made a song about it, as if I was eatin' me 'eart out for 'un. Whereas"—she tossed her head with a pitiful assumption of light-heartedness, "'e's nothin' to me—no, *nothing!*"

"Ding—dong—ding—dong, ding—dong—ding—dong!"

A sudden gust of wind seemed to waft the sound almost into the little parlour where the two women sat.

Unity winced in spite of herself; every note seemed to stab her with a fresh agony.

As for Mrs. Frampton, to use her own expression, her nerves were "all of a twitter"; and, after muttering and fidgeting for a few more minutes, she grumbled herself out of the room.

Unity saw her go with a sense of relief, and when the door had closed behind her she

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let the sewing fall from her hands and her head sink forward upon the table, and there she remained motionless and tearless, with a numb, heavy feeling that the world had come to an end, and that nothing mattered any more.

Mechanically she began to fit words to the clamour outside.

"My—life—is over. He—does—not—love—me." But the words conveyed no meaning to her dulled senses. Only the mere fact of repeating something brought a vague sense of comfort with it.

Meanwhile Mrs. Frampton flounced down the stone passage and out of the cottage door into the garden.

She had no particular reason for doing so, except that she felt unsettled, and the continuous clanging outside seemed to get into her head and to preclude work.

"An' a sinful shame 'tis," she burst out wrathfully.

She wandered down the garden path between the blue and white bordering of Canterbury Bells, and stood aimlessly leaning her elbows on the gate.

"Marnin', Missus Frampton," observed a passing neighbour; "they be givin' Paul a good rousin', bain't 'em?"

Mrs. Frampton eyed the speaker a moment or two before replying. If Mrs. Hanson expected to catch her tripping she would be wofully disappointed.

"Well, 'e was allus a brave lad," she retorted at last guardedly, "an' seein' all 'e did in the matter o' Croft's Farm, it ain't for you nor me to grudge it 'im."

Mrs. Hanson was nonplussed—she had looked for a snubbing and received amiability. She made another effort.

"Strange 'e should ha' took up with a Lunnon maid," she observed slyly; "us allus thought 'erebouts that 'im an' your Unity was——"

"*Did* 'ee?" said Mrs. Frampton with unabated good humour; "which jest shows that the best of us is li'ble to error, don't it?"

"But they was close friends surely——"

"So was me an' your Jarge close friends thirty year ago, if it comes to that," Mrs. Frampton remarked carelessly; "but I never

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fancied 'e sufficient to make it up—see—though folks declared we was bound to."

This was a masterpiece, and put Mrs. Hanson in her place at once, for it was a well-known fact in Little Swaffton that George Hanson had only fallen back on Annie Parkin as a last resource.

Mrs. Hanson bit her lips and changed her tactics.

"'Twas curious 'ow it come out—weren't it?"

"'Ow wot come out?"

"'Bout Paul's marriage an' that."

"To tell 'ee the truth I don't know 'ow it did come out," said Mrs. Frampton, who felt that she could afford to be generous now that Annie Hanson understood that she was not to be trifled with. "Jem Sayers told me this marnin' as 'e went to work. 'Paul Webber's to be spliced at twelve o'clock to-day,' says 'e, 'an' we're going to give 'im a peal,' an' that's the first I've 'eard of it."

Mrs. Hanson bristled with importance, and recovered her equanimity on the spot.

"*I* was the first to 'ear it," she announced delightedly. "Passon told me 'imself, when 'e come back from the Church Congest at Wick 'Ampton. Directly 'e got 'ome 'e comes poundin' up to see my Rachel, oo's 'ad puponia on and off for the last month. 'Mrs. 'Anson,' 'e says, jest as 'e was goin', 'you'll be interested, an' so will all 'is old friends in Swaffton, to 'ear that Paul Webber's to be married on Toosday.'

"'Never, sir!' says I.

"'E is indeed,' says passon, givin' a sort o' sigh. 'I allus 'oped—well, never mind what I 'oped. Missus 'Anson, 'e's to be married right enough to some Lunnon maid.'

"'Might I make so bold as to ask 'ow you 'eard, sir?' says I.

"'Surely, Missus 'Anson; I 'appened to meet the Vicar of St. Mary's, Chelsea, at the Congest, an' knowin' as Paul was settled in 'is parish, an' knowin' also what a good churchman Paul was, I inquired about him.'

"'An' 'e knew 'im, sir?' says I.

"'Knew 'im—oh! yes. "Paul Webber?" 'e says, "as good a feller as ever stepped—why I'm a-goin' to marry 'im next week!" 'e says.'"

'Um," commented Mrs. Frampton carelessly, "so that's 'ow 'twas;" but her expression during her neighbour's recital had been anything but careless. "Well, I must be gettin' back to me work—good day to 'ee, Missus 'Anson."

"Good day," rejoined Mrs. Hanson. She was much puzzled. She had risen at four that morning to make sure that she should be the first to impart the news to Unity—which she had done breathlessly at six a.m., as Unity cleaned the cottage doorstep. The girl had taken it calmly, and presumably had not thought it worth while to pass it on to her mother. It was very bewildering.

Mrs. Hanson, knowing little of pride herself, did not realise that some people can force a smile—aye, and a laugh too—when their spirit is crushed within them and their heart broken.

Mrs. Frampton went slowly back to the cottage. As she passed the parlour window on her way round to the kitchen, she glanced in. Unity had dropped into a kneeling posture beside the table, and, with her arms stretched out before her and her head buried, she wrestled as best she might with her despair.

Hot tears—which poor dry-eyed Unity would have envied could she have seen them—sprang to her mother's eyes.

"'E's fair done for 'ee, me maid, that's what 'e 'as," she muttered.

And then she strode past the parlour and round to the back door, realising that to attempt sympathy just now would only be to double the pain.

* * * * *

Till twilight had fallen Unity kept steadily within doors. Contempt she might have stood—anger might have roused her—but pity—pity because a man has passed one over! Well, she was a woman, and it wasn't to be borne.

However, after playing with her supper, she stole out into the small garden to cool her aching forehead with the fresh night air. Up till now everything had been a jumbled chaos of agonised confusion—now perhaps she would be able to *think*.

So it was really, *really* Paul's wedding-day—this day that had broken so like every other—till—no, it wouldn't bear remembering. That sweet spring morning which she had risen to greet with so light a heart—and then Mrs. Hanson's whining voice breaking the spell of happiness for ever.

And she had so often pictured Paul's wedding-day with a thrill of shy rapture—so often dwelt on it with a soft flush of joy—and now!

She tried to imagine Paul's wife. He had always been so fastidious about women—had he found some paragon?—some embodiment of perfection, who had stolen his very senses away, and blotted out her own image so

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effectually that he did not remember the past? The sting of it all was that only a fortnight before—one little paltry fortnight — she had received a letter from him couched in the usual endearing terms. He was still living with his uncle in Chelsea, he had said, but the fortune he had gone to seek had been long in coming. "I don't think as I can wait much longer, dear," he wrote. "If it won't come it won't, and us must jest marry and slave on together."

That Paul, the straightforward, should behave like this—to give no hint of cooling affection, and then to marry suddenly was utterly incomprehensible.

Then Unity paused in her reflections, for into her simple soul surged the shameful truth—that married or single—honourable or dishonourable—he was Paul, and she loved him still.

She bowed her head, and the first sob of which she had been guilty rose to her throat. "Oh! Paul, Paul," she murmured, "'ow could 'ee?"

So taken up was she with her grief that she did not hear the garden gate click suddenly or quick footsteps come up the short path. Only when a tall, broad form halted in front of her she gave a wild start and a

"Paul!" she gasped, and clutched at some trellis work.

suppressed scream, and retreated still further into the shadow of the cottage, that the new-comer might not notice her pale, drawn face and heavy eyes.

The man did not speak for a moment — he was evidently waiting for recognition; but either the shadows were too deep or the girl's eyes too hazy, for she gave no sign.

"Unity," he said at last, and at the sound of his voice Unity gave a scream far louder than the first had been. "Unity—'ave 'ee forgot me in six months, me gel?"

All the blood in Unity's body seemed to rush to her head, leaving her cold and paralysed. The voice was familiar—sadly, horribly familiar—why, it had been ringing in her ears all day!

"Paul!" she gasped, and clutched at some trellis work as she spoke to save her tottering limbs from collapsing altogether.

He stepped forward and wound his arm around her, but her strength came back, and with a furious struggle she freed herself from his embrace.

"Do 'ee mean to insult me?" she whispered hoarsely.

"Insult 'ee?"—there was quick pain, a sound of wounded pride in his voice. "My kisses

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weren't always an insult, Unity. What's come to 'ee?"

"You ask what 'ave come to *me*, and you a married man, Paul Webber!" she said with slow scorn.

"A married man? *Me* a married man? You're—you're daft, gel, surely!"

There was so much absolute bewilderment in the young man's tone that for the moment Unity was staggered.

"'Aven't the bells been ringing most of the marnin' on account of 'ee?" she asked faintly.

But in Paul's voice there was no less amazement as he laid his hand upon her arm and tried to read her face.

"Look 'ee 'ere, gel," he said solemnly, "either your mind's a-wanderin' or there's some big mistake."

"Some mistake," she echoed bitterly, "when passon hisself met your Chelsea minister only last week. 'Do I know Paul Webber?' he says, 'to be sure I do; why I'm a-goin' to marry 'im on Toosday.'"

This convincing declaration did not cause Paul's grasp to relax its hold. It had indeed a curious and unexpected effect upon him, for he burst out laughing—not a forced or guilty laugh, either, but one of genuine, honest mirth.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "Be that all? Why didn't 'ee say so before?"

"All?" echoed his companion, beginning in her turn to look utterly staggered.

"Yes. If the Chelsea minister told passon 'e was goin' to marry Paul Webber to-day, 'e spoke the truth."

"Spoke the truth?"

"Yes, only 'twasn't *this* Paul Webber. If 'ee'd troubled to think, Unity, 'ee'd 'ave remembered that I was called Paul after me father's brother."

"So you was!—I—I mind it now; an' was that your uncle at Chelsea?"

"Yes, a jolly bachelor o' sixty-two. 'E married a widdy woman, an' I don't think 'is friends will ever ha' done chaffin' 'im."

"Oh, Paul!" groaned Unity, "if 'e'd only told me!"

"Why, bless the maid, 'twas kep' as silent as the grave. Uncle Paul was as timid about it as a gel in 'er teens. Up till this very marnin' not a soul besides me and the passon knew."

There was a silence during which one might have counted twenty.

"So they give me a peal, did they?" Paul continued musingly at last. "Well, 'tis a pity it should be wasted."

"What do 'ee mean?" asked Unity timidly.

"I mean if 'twas old Paul's wedding day to-day, why shouldn't it be young Paul's to-morrow? And then that there ringin' wouldn't be so very far out."

"Paul!"

Paul did not at once vouchsafe an explanation, but he fumbled in his coat pocket and produced an envelope, and from the envelope a piece of parchment.

"I was allus a haphazard chap," he said, "an' when uncle give me five pound out of lightheartedness, as 'ee may say, I bought this. It's a marriage license, Unity gel. I've got a week's leave, an' then a very good offer of better things—a little shop which uncle's a-going to stock on condition that I'll get in immediate. So, thinks I, I'll persuade Unity to come, an' we'll open shop together. I can't wait for no banns, so it's for you to decide whether the license and the bells shall be wasted or no—which it is to be, gel?"

To describe Unity's feelings would be a task far beyond the powers of the merely human journalist. When one has leapt from hell to Heaven in one bound, the act cannot be analysed and set down in black and white.

"Oh, Paul!" she gasped, "did 'ee—did 'ee come a purpose to ax me?"

"Yes," answered Paul sturdily, "I did. I raced off the moment the cab with uncle an' me new aunt in it had turned the corner. Now, gel—what is it to be?"

It is doubtful to this day whether Unity Frampton ever answered Paul Webber in mere words—but in two minutes more she was crying on his shoulder, and he was stroking her hair and soothing her as he might have soothed a child. And this performance was evidently entirely satisfactory to both—for, in spite of all remonstrances on their part, on the following morning the ringers insisted on giving them another and louder peal.

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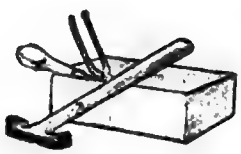
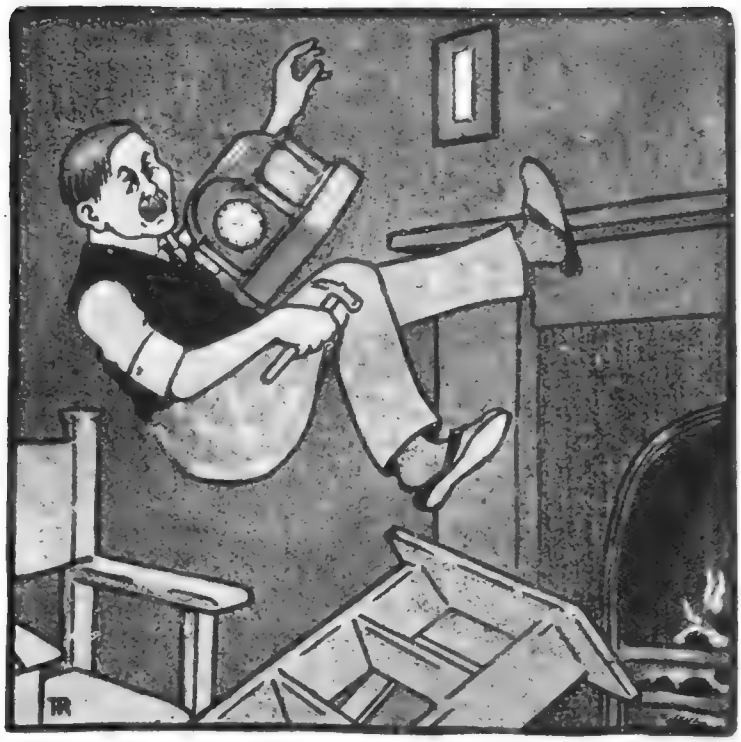
THE PICTURE HANGER





BY REGINALD RIGBY

One night last week my wife said: "John,
I've bought a painting cheap;
Do hang it in the dining-room—
It's called 'The Land of Sleep.'"

I'm not the picture-hanging build,
Strap-hanging's more my line;
But still I rashly said I would.
Just then the clock struck nine.

By quarter-past we'd found the tools
This kind of job entails—
The hammer and the housemaid's steps,
Some picture-cord and nails.

By ten o'clock we'd fixed for good
The most convenient spot;
We'd thought of it a dozen times,
But chopped and changed a lot.

'Twas right above the mantelpiece,
The fatal spot we chose—
(I dropped the tool-box at the start
But caught it—on my toes!)

My wife said: "John, do mind the steps,
They're 'wobbly' as can be."
I did: but what annoyed me was—
The steps did not mind me!

I'd mounted very gingerly,
The hammer in my fist;
But when I'd nearly reached the top
My footing somehow missed.

"A drowning man will clutch a straw,"
For me, I chose the clock,
Which failed to stay my downward flight,
And added to the shock.

I don't know what my neighbours heard;
What's more, I didn't care;
For Snooks can say a thing or two,
And Jones would—if he dare.

Eleven struck, the nail was "home";
The cost—a flattened thumb,
The clock, a pair of ornaments,
Both gone to kingdom come.

Besides the steps. Alas! for these
Their "swan-song" had been sung;
But still—the victory was mine,
The "Land of Sleep" was hung.

That night, in bed, I heard a crash,
And guessed (I know it now)
The wretched picture-cord had snatched
The laurels from my brow!

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THE HOME OF THE OSTRICH

A cock ostrich guarding the nest.

How It is Hatched, Bred, and Sheared, and Some of Its Peculiarities.

By John Glenfield.

There is a general supposition that the ostrich, when pursued, hides its head in the sand, and imagines that the enemy is no longer at hand because he is for the moment out of sight. You will find the writer of fiction constantly using this statement to illustrate some point, and you will also discover it in half the essays that have been written on the life and habits of this singular bird.

This is a fallacy, but a hardy one, and it is not likely to die out, for it is picturesque, and, moreover, furnishes us with a useful metaphor. It is a pity that the originator of it did not spend a month on a South African ostrich farm, for there he would receive a sharp lesson that might induce him for the future to adhere more strenuously to facts. Far from being a timid and foolish bird, such as the maker of metaphors would have us believe it to be, the ostrich has a remarkable amount of courage, and far more intelligence than appearances would lead one to think it possessed.

If you were engaged in the ostrich farming business, it would be your duty from time to time to catch certain of the birds, and on these occasions you would have no cause to complain of lack of excitement. In many cases, it is true, the ostrich will allow you to secure it without very much trouble, for half-a-century of domestication has done something towards making the captive breed civilised. But there are other occasions on which you will find your ostrich more troublesome to deal with. You may be approaching a cock bird with all due caution and respect, when it will suddenly lunge out at you with its heel, and then scamper off to the other end of the hundred-acre inclosure in which it is kept.

Under such circumstances you will, if you are wise, and if there is no immediate necessity for its capture, give up the chase, and wait till the ostrich is in a more friendly mood. But the man who expects to see the quarry hiding its head in the sand, will almost certainly follow the bird and make a fresh attempt to catch it.

The ostrich has already indicated its desire to be left alone, so that we can hardly

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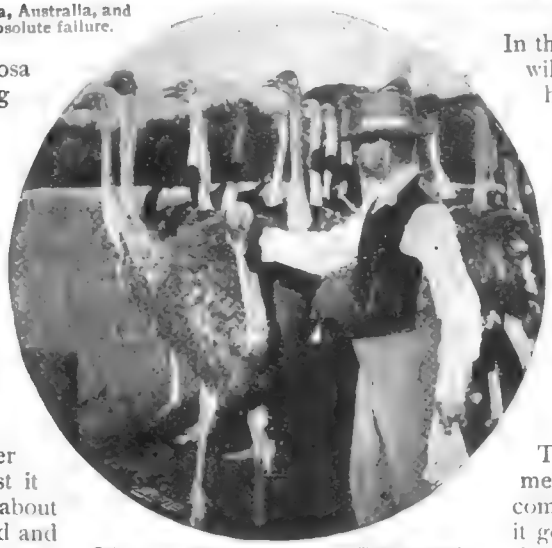
blame it for this time turning upon its enemy and making a direct attack. It will wheel about and advance with wings spread, and at such a pace that the veriest novice will perceive the necessity for seeking shelter. This may generally be found beneath the overhanging branches of a mimosa bush, for there are plenty of them on the average African farm. The ostrich will circle round and round its prisoner, the thorny branches of the mimosa preventing its coming to closer quarters.

A troop of ostriches. Though no one can say why, South Africa is the only country in which the ostrich can be bred successfully.

Attempts in South America, Australia, and the Soudan have spelt absolute failure.

If it would but wait its ultimate victory would be assured, for hunger would compel its enemy to come out eventually; but fixity of purpose is not one of the ostrich's characteristics, and it will gradually make its circles wider and wider, till at last it appears to forget all about the encounter in hand and begins to feed. This is an opportunity for the would-be captor to leave the shelter of the mimosa and make his best pace for home.



Selecting a bird for plucking. This particular specimen is coming quietly, but sometimes the birds show fight and are very awkward to handle.

These are the little incidents that enliven the labours of the ostrich farmer, but catching cock ostriches does not occupy all his time, or any considerable part of it, and he has a hundred other duties to perform which are much less exciting. One of the most important of these is the artificial hatching of the eggs.

In the wild state the cock will scrape a shallow hole in the sand, and invite his four or five wives to deposit their eggs therein. It will then make arrangements for their hatching. The night watch it will take itself, and the duty of attending to the eggs during the day it will delegate to its favourite wife.

This task, it may be mentioned, is an uncommonly light one, for it generally happens that the sun is hot enough to supply the necessary warmth. The work of the favoured hen is, therefore, to be regarded more as a post of honour than as one involving any serious amount of trouble. Perhaps that is why this office is so much sought after by all the hens, for you may see them

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surreptitiously seat themselves on the eggs whenever the chosen mother of the coming chickens leaves them uncovered. Should the cock observe this intrusion, it will promptly remove the offending hen by the simple expedient of kicking her off.

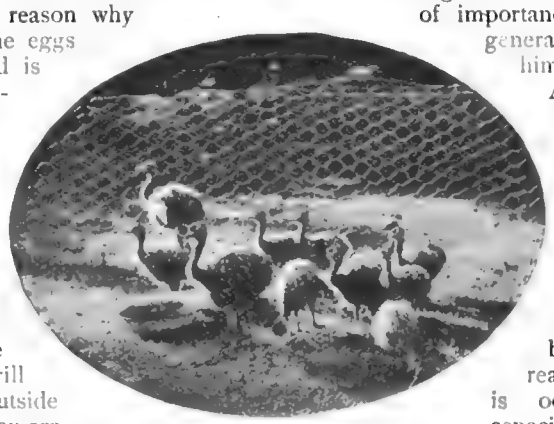
Interesting as this aspect of natural history may be, it does not appeal with any force to the farmer. His object is to have his birds as tame as possible, and to this end he prefers to hatch the eggs by means of incubators, and to rear the chicks by hand. As a rule the eggs are not collected as they are laid, but are allowed to remain in the nest till the supply seems to be ended. The object of this is two-fold. In the first place the ostrich has certain points of resemblance to the domestic hen, one being that she feels discouraged if her eggs are removed, and perhaps desists from further efforts in that direction. Another reason why the farmer leaves the eggs till they are all laid is that the ostrich possesses a remarkable power of being able to distinguish a fertile egg.

Round about the nest you will see certain eggs lying uncared for. Mark these and place them inside the nest; next day you will find the same eggs outside the nest again. They are perfectly sound, but the birds in some wonderful way know them to be unfertile. If these eggs were put in the incubator they would give no result, for the experiment has been tried again and again; hence the farmer makes use of the discrimination of the ostrich and reserves his incubator for those eggs which the birds have indicated to be fertile. In the wild state the unfertile eggs remain by the side of the nest till the chicks are hatched, when they are used as food.

When the incubator has done its work the new generation of ostriches appears—quaint little things they are, with light-coloured feathers ornamented with dark stripes. For a time they are carefully fed on mealies and barley, and then they are turned out of the rearing pens to make room for still later arrivals.

When the young ostrich is six months old it has to yield its harvest of feathers. They are worth only six or seven shillings per bird, it is true, but if the farmer did not take them they would be moulted in the ordinary course of nature. The plucking, as it is called, is an interesting process. Plucking it is in name only, for the feathers are cut off in the most careful manner, so that the bird does not receive the slightest injury. It is, in fact, exactly like cutting the finger-nails of a human being, for there is no power of feeling in the part of the feather where the section is made.

When the birds are almost ready to moult, and when the feathers have therefore attained their utmost beauty, the ostriches are rounded up into a special inclosure, in the centre of which is a sort of wooden coop raised from the ground on four legs and without floor or roof. The birds are dealt with one by one, for the cutting of the feathers is a matter of importance, and the farmer generally prefers to do it himself.



Baby ostriches are hatched in incubators and reared by hand, to make them as tame as possible.

A bird is selected and a hood slipped over its head. This is not as a rule a difficult thing to do, for they have been accustomed to being handled from the time when they were chicks; but, as we have already indicated, there is occasionally trouble, especially with the male birds. The hood which is used is a long bag made of cotton, and having an opening at one end through which the bird may breathe freely. At the other end is a piece of tape, which may be secured so as to prevent the bag from slipping up over the ostrich's head and neck.

When the hooding has been accomplished the bird is led into the wooden box which we have described, and here it is shorn of its adornments. The wing is lifted up, and the farmer carefully cuts off the beautiful curling feathers that are destined one day to adorn the head-dress of a lady of Mayfair or that of a "lidy" of Whitechapel.

It is important that a fairly long stalk should be left to the plumage, for milliners like it so, and the farmer is more than willing to meet their wishes, especially as feathers are sold by weight and the central stem is considerably heavier than the fluffy plumage itself. There is but one drawback to cutting

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Bringing up a bird to have its feathers removed. Each bird is blindfolded and put into a box in order to prevent its kicking.

the feathers with long stems; that is, the danger of cutting the vein at the root of the feather. If this vein be severed the wing will bleed, to the great prejudice of all future crops of feathers.

When the wing feathers have been removed, those of the tail are served in like manner, and the bird is then released. The stumps of the feathers left in the wings dry up in two or three months and are then pulled out without injury to the bird. If they were allowed to remain in after they were dead the ostrich would try to remove them itself, but its powerful beak was not designed for a delicate operation of this kind, and so the farmer takes the task upon himself.

In eight months from the date of plucking, the bird will have another crop of plumage ready for the shears; and so on it goes, three harvests to every couple of years. The plumage is not at its best till the end of the third year.

Ostrich farming pays very well, for South Africa can practically command the feather market of the world. Attempts have been made in Australia, in the Soudan, and in America to secure some portion of this trade: that the matter is worthy of the effort is evidenced by the fact that South Africa exports every year a million pounds' worth of feathers.

The present supremacy of our colony in this respect is likely to be maintained indefinitely, for in spite of the fact that skilled ostrich farmers in other parts of the world have taken every step to command success, they have not been able to make it pay, nor does there seem any great probability that they will be able to do so in the future. They have chosen land in all respects like the ostrich farms of South Africa—that is, warm, bare, and scrub-covered—but in vain.

How the feathers are cut from the wing. The greatest care is necessary so as not to cut the vein at the root of the feather. If this is done, future crops of feathers are poor.

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AN UNEQUAL MATCH

A Motor-Car Story.

By Morris Coleborn.

As a matter of fact, the wnole thing was in a way my fault. I insisted on driving home the longest way, though Mary did her best to convince me that Uncle Jim would be distinctly annoyed if we did not get back to the manor before dark.

"But it won't get dark for ever so long," I argued, "and, even if it does, you can cram on extra speed—and we'll simply fly down the hills."

"Regardless of police traps?" queried Mary smiling.

"There are none," said I confidently, "at least I've not seen any signs of a policeman, and we must have covered a good deal of ground since luncheon."

"Yes," said Cousin Mary, "we have been a good round, and that's one reason why I don't want to be late getting back. Father doesn't really like my motoring without the chauffeur, particularly in the dark."

"But we shall be back long before it is dark," I urged, "and if Uncle Jim is cross—well, you can leave him to me, dear."

Mary did not answer, being for the moment engaged in steering the car as near the ditch as possible to allow of the passing of a big Panhard which was coming from the opposite direction. The road was so narrow that both cars were obliged to slow down for a few moments, and as the Panhard slid by, its single occupant, a slight man with a thin, bronzed face and sunken eyes, greeted Mary in approved motorist fashion.

"What an odd-looking man! Who is he?" I questioned, glancing in some astonishment at Mary's flushed cheeks and shining eyes.

"His name is Armstrong," said Mary quietly.

"Armstrong?" I echoed laughing. "How very inappropriate."

"Why inappropriate?" demanded Mary quickly.

"Well, he's so small, and thin—in fact, he looks as though a breath of wind would blow him away."

"It would have to be a pretty strong wind, I imagine," was all Mary said, but there was something in the tone of her quiet voice that prompted me to pursue the subject.

"Who is Mr. Armstrong?" I questioned eagerly.

Mary steered the car round an awkward curve before she replied with apparent nonchalance:

"Mr. Armstrong is father's tenant at the White House; he's in the Indian Civil and is home on leave for a year."

"I wonder what made him choose an out-of-the-way place like Melstead to spend his leave in," I hazarded.

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But Mary did not answer, being apparently too engrossed in the application of the brake as we slid over the crest of a steep hill at a pace that was hardly within regulation limits.

"It's a good thing there are no police traps. Good Heavens! What's that?" I broke off as a burly figure rose from a ditch at the foot of the hill, and held up an imperious hand.

Of course Mary pulled up.

"Are you aware, madam, that it is lighting-up time?" demanded a gruff voice.

"I think you are mistaken," said Mary, drawing out her watch, "but in any case——"

The sentence ended in a sharp scream, as the burly figure sprang on to the step of the motor, and seizing Mary round the waist lifted her bodily out of the car.

I jumped to my feet, only to find my arms promptly pinioned from behind, while a thick scarf, reeking of stale tobacco, was tied across my mouth, and in another moment I felt myself being carried like a trussed chicken through a thick copse.

My feet alone were at liberty, and I flatter myself that I used them to some purpose on the shins of my captor, who growled out sundry oaths as he dumped me unceremoniously on the ground, took a stout cord from his pocket, and bound my ankles securely together.

"I'm sorry to inconvenience you, miss," he remarked ironically as he turned away, leaving me propped against the trunk of a tree utterly helpless, and, what was worse, quite unable to express my rage and indignation.

It was not, however, until I heard the throb of the motor grow fainter and fainter in the distance that I realised the full horror of the situation. To find oneself bound hand and foot in a wood at nightfall certainly savoured of romance, but I was in no humour to appreciate that aspect of the situation, particularly when I realised with a shudder that I had no idea what had become of Mary.

Apparently this was one of the situations in which it was useless to "lie low and say nuffin," though the latter was more or less a necessity owing to the evil smelling bandage across my mouth.

With some difficulty I managed to struggle to my feet, and made my way, by a series of short jumps, in what I judged to be the direction of the road.

It had grown quite dark under the trees, but, by dint of holding on to the lower branches as I passed, I flattered myself that I was getting over the ground in quite a creditable fashion, when suddenly I stumbled, and, lurching forward, fell prone across Cousin Mary lying face downward amid the undergrowth.

At first I thought she had fainted, since she did not speak, till suddenly I realised that the hard substance which had bruised my cheek as I fell was the knot that secured a gag across Mary's mouth,

Fortunately, I had managed to loosen my own bandage sufficiently to allow me to use my teeth, and I set to work on the knot with such good will that in a few moments the gag gave way, and Mary's excellent teeth were employed in a similar task on my behalf.

The rest was easy, and when at last we were free and stood chafing our swollen wrists and wondering whether we should laugh or cry, suddenly the faint sound of a motor horn reached our ears.

"It surely can't be those wretches back again!" I gasped.

Mary listened intently for a moment; then——

"No, it's coming in the opposite direction," she said decidedly.

"Then come on!" I shouted, seizing Mary's hand, "we've got to catch that motorist at the bottom of the hill!"

Mary nodded and, heedless of tumbles and innumerable scratches, we managed to run through the copse and scramble on to the road just as the motor came flying down to the foot of the hill.

I have excellent lungs and I used them to such good purpose that the driver of the car jammed on his brake and pulled up within a few yards of where we stood.

It was not until the glow of the motor lamps lit up Mary's red-gold hair clustering about her shoulders in a tumbled mass that I realised what an extraordinary spectacle we must have presented to the driver of the Panhard. Luckily, it was Mary's friend, Mr. Armstrong, and he seemed alike oblivious of Mary's hatless condition and of my tattered motor veil, which was all that remained of my smart headgear, as he jumped from his car and darted towards Mary.

"For Heaven's sake tell me what has happened!" he said huskily. "Are you hurt—I mean either of you?"

It was obvious that he only included me as an afterthought, for his eyes seemed riveted on Mary's pale, beautiful face, and when she tried to answer and couldn't he flung ceremony to the winds.

"Don't speak," he said peremptorily, as he lifted her into the car and forced a quantity of raw whisky down her throat. Then,

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having repeated the operation on my behalf, he said curtly: "Please explain what happened."

I obeyed meekly enough, and when in answer to Mr. Armstrong's question I described as well as I could the appearance of the two wretches who had attacked us, he broke in suddenly:

"The one man had red hair and beard, did you say?"

"Yes, I think it was red, but of course it was getting dusk, and——"

He did not wait for the end of the sentence, but sprang to his seat, and jerked out: "What is the outside speed of your motor, Mary?"

"Not more than thirty, I think," she replied breathlessly.

"Good! Then we ought to overtake those scoundrels.

"But you don't know what road they have taken," I remonstrated.

"I think I can make a good guess," said Mr. Armstrong. "I happened to see a motor turning on to the road at Markham's Cross——"

"But that's miles away," I ventured, "and how could you possibly see——"

"One can see a good deal from Beacon Hill with a field glass, and as we happened to be inspecting the country with a view to a rifle range, one could hardly help noticing anything so obvious as a motor going at top speed——"

"But if the car was going so quickly," I persisted, "it is surely very little use trying to overtake it. And, besides, there were two men and——"

I paused, feeling suddenly that it was impossible even to hint to this determined person that a man of his physique was no match for the two burly ruffians who had attacked us.

"Luckily the number of occupants doesn't make any difference to the speed of the car," he said smiling, "and as Miss Hesketh

Mr. Armstrong said nothing, contenting himself with taking as careful an aim with his rifle as the swaying of the Panhard allowed.

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assures me her motor is not capable of more than thirty miles an hour, and the Panhard can easily do fifty—well, the simplest thing seems to be to put on speed and sit tight."

Mr. Armstrong's suggestion was sound enough, particularly as there was very little else to be done but to sit tight with the Panhard rushing along mile after mile in the darkness at a pace that sent the wind whistling past our ears, as though we had been on a ship in mid-ocean. It blew out Mary's mane of red-gold hair behind her like a glistening veil, and, as the car turned a sharp corner, flung a long strand sideways against Mr. Armstrong's cheek.

I fancied that it was this that gave a curious ring to his voice as he turned to me and said brusquely:

"We ought to catch them up on the next rise. There's a rifle at your feet, which I want you to pass me when we get to the bottom of the hill, and if Miss Hesketh will take the steering wheel for a few moments when I slow down——"

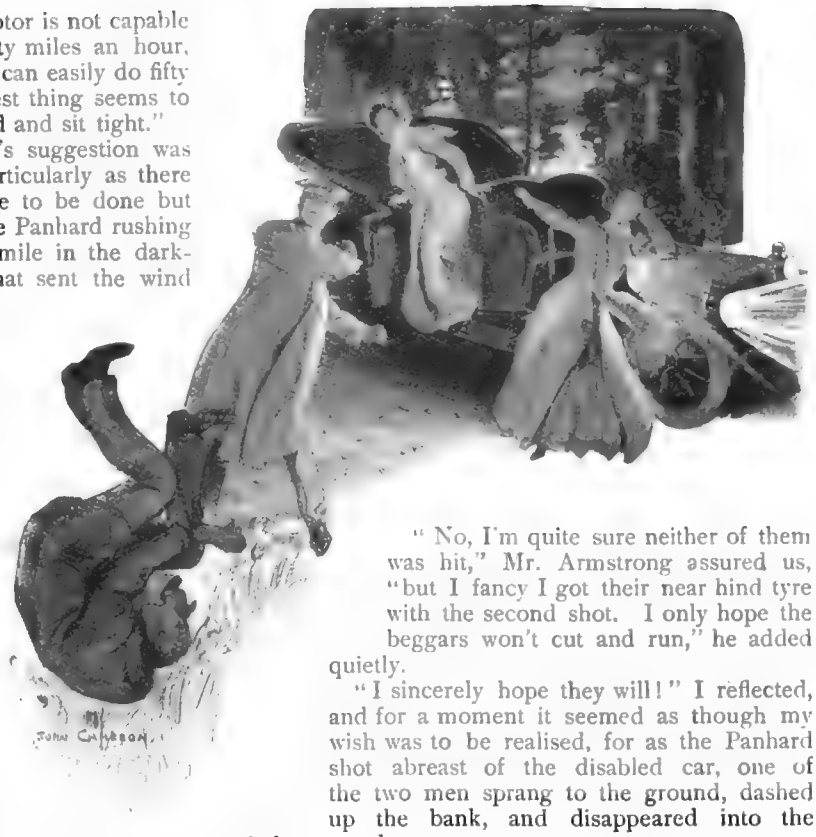
"You—you are not thinking of shooting those wretched men?" I gasped, in horror-stricken remonstrance.

"No, only the motor tyres—unless, of course, the scoundrels stop when we hail them."

But apparently nothing was further from the thoughts of the two men who, in answer to Mr. Armstrong's shout, crammed on more speed, and kept their car right in the middle of the road.

Mr. Armstrong said nothing, contenting himself with taking as careful an aim with his rifle as the swaying of the Panhard allowed.

For a few breathless seconds we waited; then the sharp ping, ping of two successive shots was answered by a yell of rage from the two men.



The next moment the body of a man went hurtling through the air.

"No, I'm quite sure neither of them was hit," Mr. Armstrong assured us, "but I fancy I got their near hind tyre with the second shot. I only hope the beggars won't cut and run," he added quietly.

"I sincerely hope they will!" I reflected, and for a moment it seemed as though my wish was to be realised, for as the Panhard shot abreast of the disabled car, one of the two men sprang to the ground, dashed up the bank, and disappeared into the wood.

"Come back, you fool!" yelled his companion, "there's only a couple of women and one man, and I'll soon settle him!"

The wretch dashed forward as he spoke, with head bent like an infuriated bull, and as Mr. Armstrong turned to meet him I gave a shrill scream.

"Oh Mary, he will be killed! Can't we——"

The rest of the sentence was drowned in a sudden rush followed by a yell of agony, and the next moment the body of a man went hurtling through the air and fell in a heap in the ditch.

With a little, agonised cry of "Jim! My darling Jim!" Mary dashed across the road, and throwing herself on her knees raised the prostrate man's head.

Then, as the light from the motor lamp fell on a shock of red hair, she gave a little gasp of astonishment, that merged into a sob of relief as she felt herself clasped in Mr. Armstrong's arms while he assured her—a trifle breathlessly—that the man in the ditch was only stunned, and would be all right in a few minutes.

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"But I don't understand how you did it," I exclaimed, glancing from our rescuer's slight, wiry frame to the huge creature lying by the roadside.

"It's just a question of Jiu-Jitsu," Mr. Armstrong explained. "I mastered some of the tricks years ago in Japan, and, of course, the fellow was very much out of training, so it was comparatively easy——".

"But you might have been killed!" sobbed Mary, "without my having told you how bitterly I regretted our foolish quarrel or——"

Jim Armstrong didn't give her time to finish the sentence, but deliberately kissed her instead, and it was evident that for the next few moments they quite forgot my existence.

Indeed, but for the timely arrival of a burly farmer in a cart, who agreed to hand over the would-be motor thief to the police, I believe nothing would have roused the lovers to the fact that it was considerably past our usual dinner hour, and the spectacle of two people ridiculously engrossed in each other's society is not so sustaining to the onlooker as to the actors themselves.

When I commented on this fact later to Cousin Jack, his reply was:

"My dear little girl, love is not a game for onlookers. You must make up your mind to take a hand——"

"But—but—it's so difficult——"

"Not a bit of it," said Cousin Jack, "here are two hands at your service! No, you mustn't speak to your partner, it's against the rules of the game!" he added rather superfluously, for one can't very well talk when—I mean, one can't do two things at a time—at least, not some things!

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TOO PREVIOUS

Far from the world's unceasing strife,
Beneath a huge tree's shade,
Upon the mossy ground there sat
A youth and lovely maid.
He tried in vain to tell the thought.
That in his breast held sway;
But words could never utter all
That he desired to say.

Quoth he: "Miss Grace, I wish to say—
I hope you will not mind—
I have but one request to make,
If you will be so kind—"
The gentle maiden hung her head,
And charmingly she blushed;
While all around them Nature's voice
In sympathy seemed hushed.

The youth went on: "What I would say
Has long lurked in my breast;
I would have spoken, but I feared
To break your pleasant rest."
She drooped her head lest he should see
The love-light in her eyes,
And they should tell him that her heart
Was willingly his prize.

At length she raised her blushing face,
And said, in dulcet tones:
"Your kind proposal, really, is
So sudden, Mr. Jones.
But if you speak to my Papa——"
He gasped. "No, no; not that!
For all I meant to say was this:
You're sitting on my hat!"

Herbert J. Brandon.

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"The Butterflies.

Confessions of Little Celebrities

No. 4.—MISS MARGARETA HUGOSSET.

The Most Wonderful Girl Acrobat in the World. She is the Only Girl who can Successfully Accomplish Both Forward and Backward "Plants" on the Trapeze.

Sometimes, when I have nothing better to do, I amuse myself by trying to remember the very first thing that happened to me. Of course, I have not yet been able to do that, for somehow or other I never get beyond the time when I was three years old. I remember a strong, good-natured man, who seemed to like nothing better than to be pulled about and climbed over by a couple of very lively and noisy children. The children were my brother Hugo and myself, and the man was, of course, my father, who in those days was one of the best-known and cleverest of acrobats.

Those rough-and-tumble games really led to my brother and I becoming acrobats ourselves, for, as we grew older, though the games still went on, we got our father to let us try a few simple exercises and feats, instead of just squirming about as we did at first. That's how we became "Butterflies."

I suppose most of the boys and girls who will read my "Confessions" in the Royal Magazine think that we children who perform in public have a very hard time of it indeed. That may be so with some children, but I am quite certain that you could not find two happier little souls than Hugo—he's the other Butterfly, you know—and me. If only you could see us at home you would say what a very happy family we are, and how carefully looked after.

I ought to say that, although my father is English, my mother is Austrian. Both Hugo and I were born in Vienna, and most of our education was received there. We are very fond of our books, and all our school-lessons have to be done very carefully indeed, but that doesn't make much difference to us, for we like our lessons so much that we never do anything but our best. All our lessons are done in German, because we speak it so much better than English, having performed a great deal on the Continent, and we go in regularly for examinations when we are in Vienna. My brother is just as far on in his work as if he had studied regularly at a German school.

Hugo can easily lift his sister Margareta over his head with one hand.

Wherever we happen to be — and we travel about a good deal—the first thing my parents do is to engage a private tutor, who comes to us for a couple of hours or so every day, so that there is no interruption in our

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lessons. Sometimes in England inquisitive gentlemen call to see how we are getting on. I think they are inspectors or something of that sort; but at any rate they always seem pleased when they see us at work, or look through our exercise books.

I was about five years old when my father and mother decided to allow me to take up gymnastics seriously. How glad I was when I heard this! Though I was at that time a very little girl indeed, I already thought a good deal about the future, and it was my great wish to become a clever acrobat. Even then I had a clear idea of the sort of "turn" I would like to give, and Hugo and I often made up imaginary programmes which we used to work through in private.

This did pretty well except for one thing—there was no audience to applaud us when we accomplished some particularly clever feat. We could not do without applause, so every now and then we would stop our performance in order to clap our hands and shout "Bravo!" after which we used to go on to something even more exciting—and then more applause!

It was very shortly after that our real training began. I wonder if any of my readers really know what the training of a gymnast means? Gymnastics, of course, take up a lot of time, but there are many other things to be done as well. Dancing is needed—I love dancing—to make you light of foot, and you must also learn how to walk; I mean how to walk *properly*. But besides gymnastics and dancing, Hugo and I learnt juggling.

Although he weighs 7st. 2lb. and is older than she, Margareta can lift and carry her brother as easily as he lifts her.

This helps to make your eye quicker, and is very useful to an acrobat in many other ways besides. One thing I mustn't forget—we have always been encouraged to play games. We can run and jump as well as most children; in fact, I think we can jump better than most. We are also very fond of swimming, and that reminds me what a grand time we had last summer at Lowestoft and Yarmouth. The bathing there was lovely!

Sometimes, when we can arrange it, we get up a picnic party when on tour, and then we always play some game or other, generally cricket, of which I am very fond. Best of all, I think, I like boating. I did quite a lot of rowing at Lowestoft, and have had many a long pull on the lake at Zurich. All these outdoor games help us tremendously, but, of course, they are not really part of our training.

The most difficult work we ever had to do was the preparation for the act which we are performing as the "Two Butterflies." Most of our work is done on the trapeze and rope. We conclude our trapeze act like this: I hang from my trapeze, head downwards, and catch my brother at the end of a long flight from his trapeze. This is ever such a difficult thing to do, and we had to practise a very long time indeed before we could do it properly, I can tell you.

Neither Hugo nor I have ever had an accident, though some of the things we do look rather dangerous. You see, my father is so careful and experienced that there is not much chance of anything going wrong. He examines all our apparatus, clothes, and so on, several times a day, and as neither Hugo nor I know what it is to feel nervous, we are not likely to come to much harm.

Oh! I ought to say that I had one little accident not long ago, but it didn't happen whilst I was performing. I hurt my right arm when helping my father to fix up something on the stage, but it is all right again now.

Unfortunately, I need a license in order to perform, and so did my brother until quite recently. There is never any difficulty about it, however. We are now so well known in this country that magistrates hardly ever object.

A very funny thing happened at Manchester the last time we were there. We had been in Manchester so often that the magistrate

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knew us quite well, and used to chat most pleasantly with us. This time I had to appear at the police-court alone, for since our previous visit to Manchester my brother had passed the "license" age.

Well, the magistrate looked at me, and said: "Don't you feel very lonely now?" I hadn't thought of that before, but when I looked round at the place where Hugo ought to have been if he hadn't grown so big, I really *did* feel lonely, so I answered: "Yes," and I suppose I said it so earnestly that it must have sounded very funny. At any rate, everybody laughed, and the magistrate more loudly than anyone.

This license-getting is one of the little trials which we child-artists have to put up with. It is not very nice having to go to a police-court, but it has to be done. I shall be glad when I am "free" like Hugo.

I simply love travelling, especially in the train. It never seems to make me tired. I am so fond of sitting at the window of the carriage and watching the trees and fields as they pass by, or seem to pass by. We have travelled a good deal since we first appeared in public. Our very first performance was at Vienna, and our second at the Hansa Theatre at Hamburg. Since then we have been in Vienna again more than once.

Amongst other places we have visited on the Continent are Berlin, Prague, Carlsbad, Budapest, Chemnitz, Leipzig, and Dresden. We have performed in most of the large towns in England, but have only paid one visit to Scotland; that was when we appeared in Edinburgh. Ireland we have not yet visited. When I am a few years older we shall go to America, and I expect we shall have a long stay there, for our parents are very well known in the States.

I think I like English audiences best. We are always well received in London, especially at the Hippodrome, where we have had three engagements, each of several weeks, but Manchester and Liverpool give us, I think, the best welcome.

We took part in the pantomime (*The Forty Thieves*) at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, last Christmas, and were delighted with the kind way in which we were treated by everybody. When we finish our present engagement at the London Hippodrome, which will not be, however, for many weeks, we are going to Paris, and then we begin a long tour in the provinces. After that we shall probably come back to London once more.

This is how we spend our days. Of course, some days are different from others, but, as a rule, we don't alter our habits very much. We get up about eight o'clock, have breakfast, and do our school lessons. Then we go out for a walk, and come back in time for dinner. After a little rest we walk to the Hippodrome, where our "turn" comes on very soon.

By three o'clock we are home again, and amuse ourselves in different ways—generally out of doors—till five o'clock, when we have tea. After tea I play with Hugo and my little sister, who is seven years old, or do some needlework or embroidery—I am really quite proud of both.

Oh, dear! I was trying to describe how we spend our day, and I have only got as far as "after tea." Well, at about seven o'clock we get ready for the evening performance, and when that is over—which, so far as we are concerned, is at eight o'clock—we go straight home, and after supper our bedtime soon comes.

Of course, unless we are rehearsing some new gymnastic feat, we do not practise very much when fulfilling an engagement. I think I ought to mention, however, that every morning we do some light physical exercises without apparatus, unless you count dumb-bells as being an apparatus.

Do you know, I can lift Hugo right over my head quite easily, although he weighs 7st. 2lb.! Of course he can lift me, too, but then I weigh many pounds less than he does, and besides, he is a boy and is older than I am.

I wonder how many little readers of my confessions can lift their brothers and sisters?

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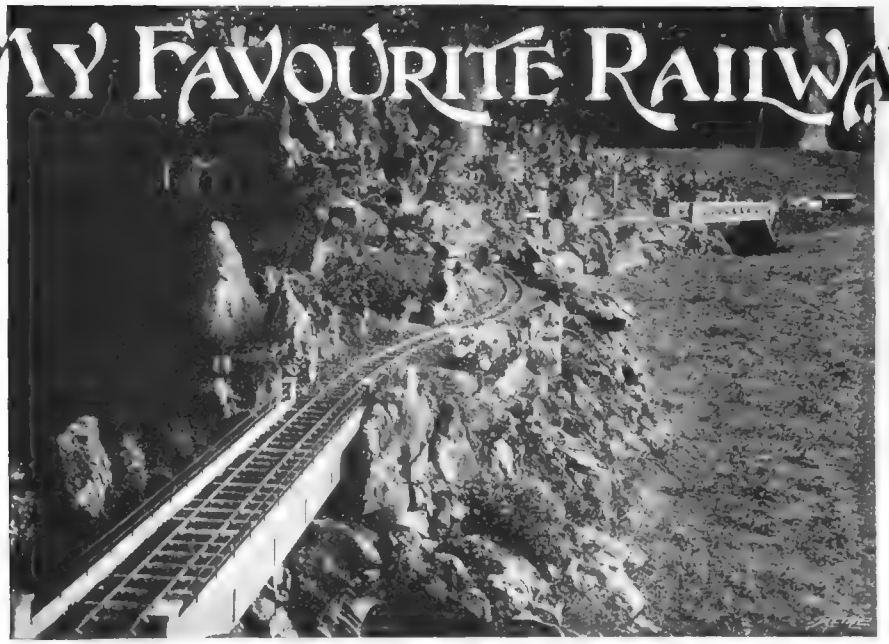
My Favourite Railway



A sharp curve amid mountain scenery. Guard rails are necessary round this curve to keep the engine from jumping the metals.

An Interesting Description of a Miniature Railway, with its Junctions, Bridges, Tunnel, and Sidings all Complete.

By X. N. Trick.

A few miles beyond the northernmost terminus of the Midland Railway, on the banks of the river, which higher up conducts the line through one of the most beautiful valleys of Cumberland and Westmorland, there lies a short, single-line system which, by the warm colouring of its locomotives and rolling stock, we should judge to be a branch of the Midland itself. But the company's time-table will reveal no notice of its train service, no mention of its two stations, and application to the gold-laced officials of Derby or St. Pancras will, no doubt, elicit a disclaimer as to any ownership or connection.

Should these inquiries evoke any grey phantom of possible competition, the facts that the little mile posts diligently record a fraction of their good intention, the entire run covering a distance of 350ft., that the gauge is $3\frac{1}{4}$in., and that neither ordinary nor debenture stock is as yet quoted, are reassurances we haste to offer!

Notwithstanding, however, the Lilliputian course of this railway, the variety of scenery is all and everything a well-advertised route can boast. Here are the grey Grampians towering above the Caledonian passage of Glen Ogle; here West Highland gorges spanned by girder bridges, and here the smooth green sweep of Sussex downs. Here also are miniature imitations of the Roade Cutting, Brunel's embankments, and the Box Tunnel, Shap Incline, and Beattock Summit!

The terminus, where station, engine sheds, turn-table, and shunting sidings are grouped, is raised on a grass embankment to a height of about 4ft. Here, before starting, we may examine the nature of the rolling-stock, locomotives, and permanent way. The latter is modelled exactly on the standard type. The sleepers, which are firmly ballasted with riddled cinders, are six-inch deal, dipped in creosote; the rails brass; the little chairs and fish-plates a special mixture, for everything used must be thoroughly practical, damp-proof, and rust-resisting, to bear the brunt of traffic and the elements. The little wedges between chair and rail (known to the initiated as "keys") must be of cedar or some hard

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The terminus—which is also the starting point, turn-table, and engine sheds.

wood, on account of its unshrinkable quality, and every screw, spike, nail, and rivet throughout the work either brass or copper, while all buildings and woodwork must be tarred or painted every spring.

The rolling stock consists of one express engine and tender, one corridor bogie passenger coach, one waggon, and a brake van, a goods engine, truck, and van.

The express engine is a model of the Midland Railway No. 2361, type 4-4-0; one —we think, in fact, the first — of Mr. Bassett Lowke's now quite famous class of models.

This engine, so far as models go, has apparently solved the vexed question of relative proportions in cylinders, driving wheels, and heating surface, as it easily draws a heavily-laden train over the steep gradients and almost continuous curves inseparable from a route constructed chiefly with a view to scenic effect.

From the terminus we get a good start along a straight and level stretch, with nothing to hinder us (provided the honorary platelayer has diligently swept away all twigs, beech-nuts, acorns, and other casual obstructions) for a clear 40ft. Here the embankment ends, and, swinging over a girder-bridge above a rocky chasm, we speed along a narrow ledge, backed by high limestone rocks, especially pretty in spring, when clefts and crevices are filled with anemones, primulas, and a variety of saxifrages. Later on, Alpine poppies, rock pinks, etc., have their turn, the railway thus providing scope for tastes æsthetic as well as scientific.

Further on, where the rocks rise to their highest, the line bifurcates, and the signal at the junction indicates our journey is to be continued westward up a steep gradient through Glen Ogle. Emerging from this long, deep, and narrow gorge we reach the summit of the line, and, descending over an exposed section, catch a fleeting glimpse of a broad stream below and a distance of stretching marches. The fresh breeze blowing up the Solway carries the voice of passing curlew, gull, and oyster-catcher—and incidentally cools the engine's boiler!

A goods train in Glen Ogle. This is the summit of the gradient.

However, we are on a downward gradient, and presently passing under a Gothic sandstone entrance, we plunge

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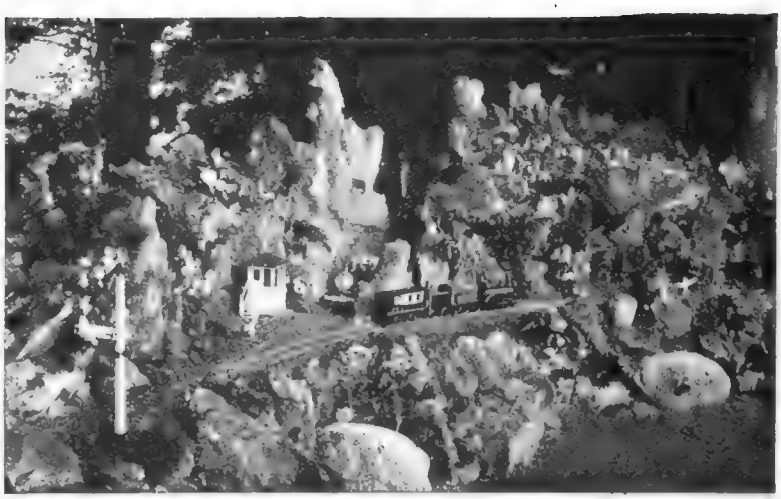
into the gloom of the Box Tunnel. This is about 12ft. long, and in the preliminary stages, before traffic commenced, was regarded with peculiar favour by the neighbouring rabbits for family affairs.

Even now, if not closed overnight, it is advisable to send through a light pilot to dislodge possible intruders.



At this junction the line forks, and the left-hand track leads up a steep incline through Glen Ogle.

One young and unexperienced bunny, who ventured into what he probably mistook for a palatial burrow, was thus met by an awful monster with hot and poisonous breath and fierce red eyes, yet the smell thereof was neither ferret, stoat, nor weasel. He escaped with a tale of woe (it was singed, we believe), which evidently scared similar adventurous spirits into discretion.

It is a curious fact that, while the surrounding shrubberies and grounds are overrun by an ever increasing mining population, no damage has ever been caused by rabbits on the immediate property of the railway itself, which is no doubt regarded as an elaborately-laid trap.

Once out of the tunnel the line takes a wide, right-handed sweep, following the contour of a mossy green bank for some 40 or 50 ft. Slowing down in deference to the only wayside station on the line, we make a long, horseshoe curve on a radius of about 15 ft., through a deep turf cutting which brings into view the distant signals of the junction once more.

Before reaching this, we clear the cutting, and the ground gently falling, we run along an embankment to the height of 18in. which conducts us to the lattice work girder bridge (a 6ft. span) over a miniature loch and into mountain scenery again.

Thence we swing round a sharp bend to the left—so sharp as to necessitate the use of guard rails—and rattling over the points find ourselves once more among the saxifrage and Alpine poppies.

A train about to cross one of the girder bridges.

The scheme of the railway is thus an irregular loop with a long tail, the undulating nature of the ground providing a continual variety of feature to the route. Like every well-regulated railway it has been the subject of a successful lawsuit, and its construction has occupied three summers.

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A LIE FOR A LIFE

A Pathetic Little Story of the Franco-Prussian War.

By Barry Sheil.

It was an evening in the summer of 1870, and the enemy was in France. All day long the Prussian guns had been thundering away upon the heights above Vaudere, filling the hearts of the simple peasantry with apprehension, but, owing to the sheltered position of the village, doing comparatively little damage.

The village of Vaudere was situated in an abrupt valley at the foot of a steep vine-hill. The struggling cluster of houses was not unlike a crescent in shape, and the only inn, La Maison Blanc by name, stood about midway between the two extreme points, backing on to a wooded slope.

Madame Montaudon, the proprietress, an old woman and much wrinkled, had just entered the sanded parlour from another room, when a breathless man, bearing in his arms a little, fair-haired girl of seven years, hurried in through the outer door.

The newcomer was young, scarcely more than thirty, and he wore the uniform of a French infantry soldier of the line.

"Philippe!" cried the woman aghast.

"Mother!" murmured the man.

He set the child abruptly down on the floor, and himself sank into a chair by the big deal table.

"Mother," he repeated in a low, broken voice, "alas, I am undone! A stray shell from the Prussian battery set fire to my house. I heard of it just as the order came for us to march upon the enemy in an opposite direction; and I could only think of my home—and of my little one here—and I—" he faltered; "well, I slipped off—I couldn't bear not to see—not to know all—all that had happened—I thought of what *she* would have said—dear, sweet Celeste, lying in the churchyard—she seemed to tell me to go to the child—our child—in our burnt-out home—and, oh! I needn't tell more—I—I am a deserter, mother—a doomed man!" He threw his arms upon the table, and dropped his head upon them.

"A deserter?" repeated the old woman, as if scarcely comprehending. "Doomed?"

The man raised his head again.

"Yes," he said. "Desertion in face of the enemy is what they will call it, and the punishment is——"

He hesitated, and broke off; the touch of the child's soft hand on his had stopped the words on his lips. It was piteous, indeed, to see the tears glistening in the large, blue eyes, and the strained, wistful expression upon the sweet face.

"*Oh, mon cher papa!*" she exclaimed earnestly. "You were good to come to me. They will know it—and they will forgive you."

He shook his head.

"Forgive me? Oh, my child! For a soldier who deserts in the face of the enemy there is no forgiveness."

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"What, papa, will they do to you?" she asked between her sobs.

He shivered, and kept silent.

"*Papa--mon cher papa*," she urged, "do, do tell me!"

"Nothing, dear little heart," he answered, trying to speak cheerfully. "Nothing, that is—that will hurt much."

"*Mon papa*," she said softly; "I knew it. So—we'll build the house up again, won't we, when September comes, and you're home to gather the grapes? They're not burnt, papa, the grapes. Yes, we'll build it up again—the house, and we'll live there again just the same, you and I; and——"

She was interrupted by the abrupt opening of a door, and the appearance of the small serving-maid who assisted Madame Montaudon with the business of the inn.

"Madame," announced the girl quietly, "he is dead—the poor young man."

"Ah!" said her mistress, as if the news were not unexpected. "Poor young man!"

Philippe looked at his mother inquiringly.

"It is a young man who came along yesterday," she hastened to explain. "He had sunstroke, and fell out of the ranks. They left him for dead, but he managed to crawl as far as here. I did all I could for him."

"No doubt of that, mother."

"He was a private soldier," she went on, "and he—he reminded me of you, my son. Yes, he was like—so very like—hair and eyes——"

"Would madame be inconvenienced if I ran home now?" interposed the girl, who held her hat swinging from her arm by its strings. "My sister, who is so ill——"

"You may go, Marie," said Madame Montaudon quickly. "But be back in an hour. . . . Yes," she went on as the door closed behind the girl, "as I was saying, he was so like you, Philippe, this poor young man, that I tended him, thinking—— Ah! What is it? You are ill!"

She sprang forward, her face full of apprehension, for the soldier, who had risen and gone to the window, suddenly recoiled therefrom with ashen cheeks:

"The search party!" he gasped. "They have entered the village! I am lost!"

Madame Montaudon wrung her hands.

"Oh, Philippe, my son—not lost! We must save you—hide you!"

"No use, mother; they will search every corner. There is no escape." He caught up the child. "Oh, my little one!" he cried. "My motherless little one!"

He pressed her to his breast, and rained kisses on the sweet, wee, upturned face, until suddenly arrested by someone tugging frantically at his sleeve.

"You must not die!" gasped Madame Montaudon, "you shall not! I have a plan." She pointed to the door of the room from which the girl had lately emerged. "That young fellow (her voice sank to a whisper)—who is dead is like you—like enough perhaps to deceive them. You must put your clothes on him—make a dead Philippe Montaudon for them to find when they come. Do you see? Do you understand?"

Almost at once, and without needing further explanation, Philippe grasped the idea. Once more hope touched him with her kind, comforting hand. His face brightened, and, taking the child to the window, he bade her watch during his absence of a few moments, and call him the instant the soldiers appeared at the end of the little street.

Quickly she acceded, and barely had the gruesome exchange been effected ere her urgent voice recalled them.

"Papa, papa! The soldiers!"

Philippe hurried to the window.

"Yes," he said shakily, "it is a search party, but they are not men of my battalion—others must have been told off for the business. So there is hope—they will not know me personally."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Madame Montaudon fervently. "But go now. Hide in the wood—any part where the trees are thickest. I will do the rest."

Thus adjured, Philippe no longer delayed. It was not a moment too soon, for the soldiers were marching rapidly, and he was scarcely through the back door, which opened almost into the wood, before they came to a halt in the courtyard of the inn.

* * * * *

Alone, the child stood by the table, as a young officer, captain in an Alsatian regiment of infantry, stepped briskly into the room.

"Who owns this inn?" he asked gently. "Not you, my child?"

"No, Monsieur," she answered timidly. "It's Granny's inn."

"So it's Granny's inn, is it?" he said, still very softly. "And she's called Madame Montaudon—is she not?"

The child nodded assent.

"And where is madame at this moment?" he asked. "I must see her at once. I am looking for——" he hesitated, "a soldier—a desert——" he broke off again. The sight of the child touched him. In a flash he saw

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his home in far-off Alsace, his fair, young wife, and their own little one. No, he would not use that word to her. "A soldier——" he paused. "I'm told he is here."

"But he's not here, Monsieur!" she cried earnestly, seizing his hand. "He's far—oh, ever so far away, and—" She lifted her face to his, full of a simple, trustful confidence, that went straight to his heart. "Do you know," she confided, "he's my papa—my own dear papa, and mamma's gone over there to the churchyard, and can't come back to me. So you see I've only got him—papa. Granny's good, but she's old, very old. How," she concluded solemnly, "would you like to be me, Monsieur?"

"Well," he answered with an amused smile, "it certainly is not an experience I should covet, little one. But if your father is not here, where is he? Come, tell me."

"I don't know, Monsieur. He—he's run away."

"Yes, that's just the trouble; he has run away, and my orders are to find him and bring him back. Sergeant," turning to a tall, stern soldier at his elbow, "let the men search the wood; he is probably lurking there."

"Oh, no, no, Monsieur!" cried the child pleadingly, and immediately burst into tears.

"Never mind," he said in soothing tones. "He's far away, you say. Don't cry, little one."

"Celeste! Celeste!" suddenly called the voice of Madame Montaudon from within. "Where are you?"

The child turned obediently, and ran into the inner room, and a moment later Madame appeared in person,

"A thousand pardons!" she said, bowing very obsequiously. "I fear I have kept Monsieur waiting. With what can I have the pleasure of serving you?"

"It is not a question of service, Madame,"

"Strange!" he murmured.

replied the officer promptly and sternly. "I am here to arrest one, Philippe Montaudon, for desertion in face of the enemy. Your son, I believe?"

"My son!" she cried, evincing sudden and acute distress. "Ah, my poor unhappy son! Yes, it is indeed so. But he is beyond man's power to judge now,

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Monsieur;" and she turned her eyes upwards.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"My son, my unfortunate son, Philippe," said the old woman in low, trembling tones, "died but half-an-hour since, Monsieur."

The officer smiled incredulously.

"My good woman," he said, "do you expect me to believe that story?"

"Oh, if Monsieur doubts my word—" She turned quickly to the door by which she had entered. "Monsieur may see for himself."

He followed her into the room, and up to the small, wooden bed, whereon lay the dead soldier.

"Strange!" he murmured, bending over; and then, straightening himself suddenly, shot a searching glance at the old woman, who stood with her handkerchief to her eyes, simulating grief.

He was on the point of addressing her, when all at once there was a commotion without, and the Sergeant strode into the room, followed by several soldiers, and between two of these walked Philippe Montaudon—a prisoner. The Sergeant saluted.

"Monsieur le Capitaine," he said, "we found this man hiding in the wood. We believe him to be the deserter Montaudon. He denies——"

"Your name, please, instantly," the officer interrupted.

"Pierre Michet, peasant of Bruges," tremblingly answered the prisoner.

"A peasant?" The officer scrutinised him keenly. "There is the look of a soldier about you, or I am much mistaken. The truth now!"

"Will Monsieur look?" interposed the old woman; "only look at my poor dead son here?"

The officer glanced from one to the other, twisting his moustache and frowning.

"Sergeant, examine the corpse!" he commanded suddenly.

The man obeyed.

"Now, which of the two best answers to the description you had given you of the deserter, Montaudon — the living or the dead?"

"The living, Monsieur le Capitaine."

"You are sure?"

"Almost——"

"But it must not be almost," shot in the officer sharply. "This is a matter of life or death. There must be no doubt about it."

The Sergeant saluted again—deferentially, almost obsequiously.

"Monsieur le Capitaine will pardon me," he said, "but the matter can be decided at once, and beyond a doubt."

"How?"

"The little girl, Monsieur."

"Ah—the little girl!" A shadow passed over the young officer's face. "The little girl," he murmured again. He hitched his sword impatiently to his side, and, lifting his shako, pushed the hair off his brow. At the same moment his quick eyes fell upon Philippe, who was exchanging anxious glances with his mother.

"If Monsieur le Capitaine will permit me, I will fetch her."

She moved towards the door; but the Sergeant, grimly smiling, barred the way.

"Scarcely," he said coldly. "Monsieur le Capitaine will not permit that. The child must not be told what answer she is to make to our question."

"Certainly not," said the officer promptly; but, though his heart was not in his words, their effect was at once apparent.

The prisoner, stricken as he was, struggled bravely to conceal his agitation; but Madame Montaudon's fortitude gave way suddenly, and she sank sobbing on her knees by the side of the bed.

The young officer looked silently from one to the other. He realised fully now, as indeed he had done from the beginning, the whole deception. At the same moment a great wave of pity surged into his heart, and, being a Frenchman, he felt his throat fill with tears.

"Sergeant," he said, "I will fetch the child myself."

Then he went out.

It was some minutes ere he returned, and then, with the child in his arms, he bent over the bed.

"Now, tell me, little one," he said in a low, persuasive voice, "Is this your father—here—lying here, or," pointing towards the prisoner, "is he there—standing over there?"

The child hesitated. Madame Montaudon had ceased her sobbing to listen, and the silence in the room was intense.

"Come!" insisted the officer kindly. "Here—or there?"

"Here—lying here," answered the child almost inaudibly, and buried her troubled face in his coat sleeve.

The officer glanced uneasily at the Sergeant.

"Come—a little louder," he urged. "Who is it lying here?"

"*Mon papa—mon cher papa*—asleep."

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The face of the generous young soldier brightened.

"Good little maid," he said, smiling joyously. "That's all we want to know. Now give me a kiss for the sake of my little one at home."

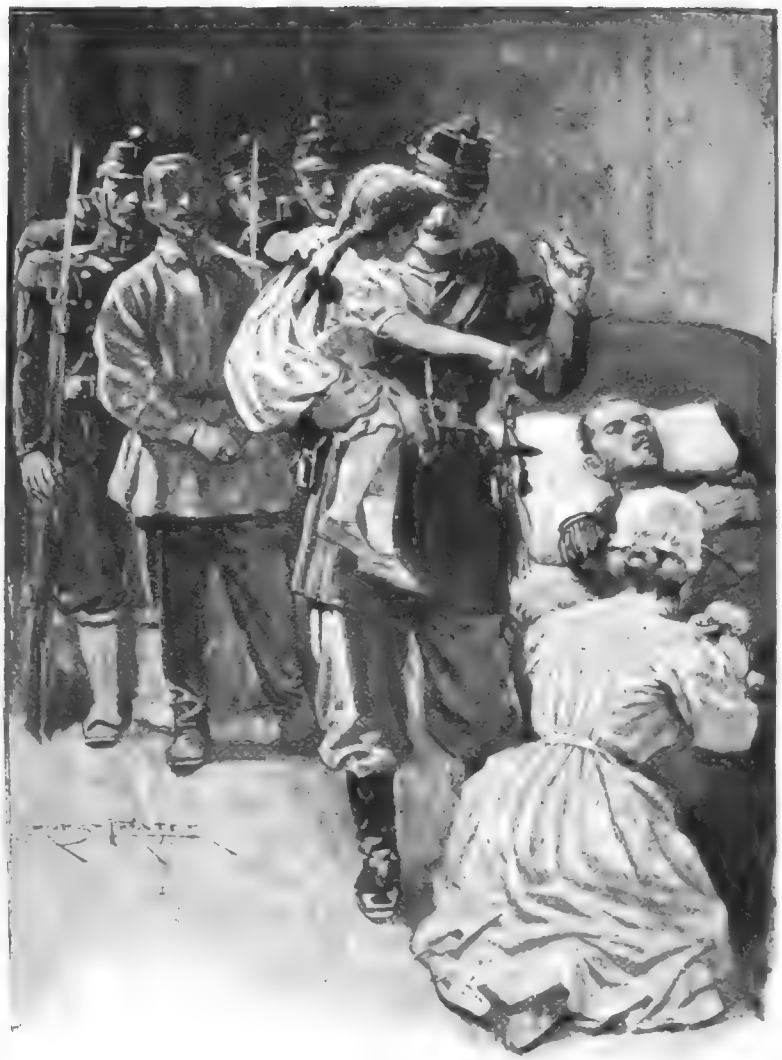
The caress given and returned, the child was placed in Madame Montaudon's arms, after which the young officer turned peremptorily to the soldiers.

"Release the prisoner," he said, "and form up in the courtyard. We march instantly!"

The men obeyed.

"Farewell, friend," said the officer kindly, as he passed Philippe at the door. "Rest assured you will not be troubled again."

Philippe seized the proffered hand, and held it tightly for an instant. His voice trembled, and the tears streamed down his face.



*"Mon papa—mon cher papa—*asleep."

"God bless and reward you, Monsieur!" he gasped.

The officer went out, and closed the door carefully behind him. Those within heard the shuffling of feet as the men fell in, the order to "march" sharply given, and then the rhythmic tread of the search party as it passed out of the courtyard. Not till then did Philippe Montaudon, rushing forward, snatch the child from his mother's arms, and press her against his heaving breast.

"Celeste—my little Celeste—my deliverer!" he sobbed.

"Papa—mon cher papa!"

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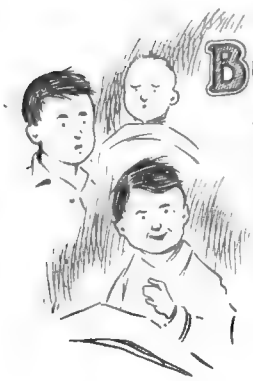
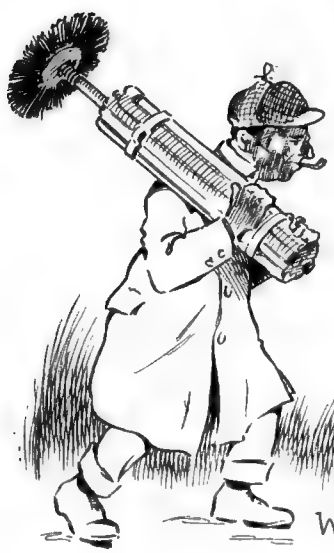
It Wasn't Him After All

There's a noise in the chimney,
a noise on the roof,
Like the stamp of a foot, or the
scrape of a hoof—
At least, so it seems as they lie
there in bed,
And Tom pulls the blankets right
over his head.



But Bob, who is bolder, says,
"Hip! hip! hooray!
It's dear Santa Claus who is
coming this way.
He's bringing a sleighload of
presents and toys
For children and grownups,
for girls and for boys."

"If he," remarks Billy, "should
chance to get stuck
In the chimney, you know, 'twould be
just like our luck;
If <u>that</u> is too narrow, or <u>he</u>
is too fat—
Anyhow, it'll make him as black
as your hat."



W. ESMOND.

Now the plaster and soot are
beginning to fall,
And Bob, Tom and Billy set
up a loud bawl.
As the thought, all at once, into
each mind <u>will</u> creep
That it's nobody else in the world
but the Sweep!

ADA L. HARRIS.

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SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

Mr. Robert William Tutt.

No. XXIV.—THE DESERT BATTLE OF TEL-EL-KEBIR.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF ROBERT WILLIAM TUTT, LATE ROYAL MARINE LIGHT INFANTRY.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

The battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought in twenty minutes on September 13th, 1882. It was the final victory of the British Army in Egypt, and shattered the power of Arabi Pasha, who was captured and condemned to death, but respited. Under Sir Garnet Wolseley, the British, to the number of nearly 14,000, stormed the intrenchments at Tel-el-Kebir, which were held by 26,000 fanatical Egyptians, by whom they were considered impregnable. The attack was made at dawn, after a great night march across the desert, and the defenders were driven out and scattered. They lost in killed alone about 2000 men, and the whole of their enormous stores were taken. The British loss was 11 officers and 43 men killed, and about 320 wounded, of whom some afterwards died. For his services in this campaign Sir Garnet Wolseley was thanked by Parliament, raised to the peerage, and received a grant of £30,000.

A MOONLESS night of dense Egyptian darkness. Overhead the black sky, pitted with faint stars; underfoot the sand of the desert; softly crunching over it 14,000 British soldiers, steady and silent, to fall with the bayonet on 26,000 sleeping, unsuspecting Gippies in their intrenched camp.

There, in a few words, you have a picture of the first act of the swiftly played, decisive drama of Tel-el-Kebir.

We were all pretty well used to fighting and enduring. For myself I had been at Mahuta and Kassassin with the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and had got on terms of more than welcome intimacy with bad food, poisoned water, myriads of flies, and the ravages of dysentery, to say nothing of that sweltering, fatal weather which the tourist up the Nile knows only by repute. Let him be thankful that he can allow other people to make its acquaintance for him.

Kassassin was a stiff, hard struggle on August 28th, 1882, far and away a more strenuous battle, reckoned as a battle pure and simple, than Tel-el-Kebir, because it lasted many hours, while the latter was over in fifteen or twenty minutes. We were quietly at breakfast when shells began to fall in amongst us from the Egyptian garrison at Kassassin. We left our meal and sprang to arms, and during the whole of that hot, blazing day we were rushing here, there, and everywhere, fighting and suffering torture from thirst.

When the day ended, the enemy, who had attacked us, abandoned Kassassin and hurried off to fortify himself at Tel-el-Kebir, a very few miles away. The cavalry did splendidly, and there are those who say that if the action had been properly followed up the Egyptians would have been destroyed completely there and then. But, of course, there are always so many people who are wonderfully wise when a thing is over.

Arabi had had sixteen days to do his work in, and thousands of first-rate men to do it, and he had carried out his plans with astonishing completeness. So had our own Commander-in-Chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley. It seemed like drawing up a time-table, and

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carrying it out as if it had been a programme. At such a time, said Sir Garnet, such a thing was to be done—and at such a time it was finished. That is the way of the men who have made Egypt. He had some fine soldiers with him, and fine sailors. There was an almost unknown soldier, an Engineer, who knew his business amazingly well, and I doubt not, was even then looking far ahead and seeing strange things with those cold, calculating eyes of his. That was the present Lord Kitchener.

Everybody believed in the star of Sir Garnet's good fortune, and the desert battle justified our faith. He had prepared his plans, and we were now to put them into execution in a thrilling fashion.

You can picture the scene without much difficulty. Take a vast stretch of hard gravel and sand—the desert; put an army of twenty-six thousand men on it, with guns, horses, camels, mules, stores, ammunition, and the hundred and one odd things that are needed for soldiers in the field; inclose that army in intrenchments of low walls made of mud, sand, and gravel, and bound together by wattles—an intrenched camp, with a front face four miles long and a flanking face of two miles. At intervals in the wall, which was about four feet high, put bastions, mounting guns, and in front of these place deep trenches. Dispose the attackers in two divisions of two brigades each, with forty-two guns and cavalry, and arrange them in two horns of a crescent, with orders to advance and close in on the camp and take it.

That was what the Commander-in-Chief directed us to do.

That was what we did.

Our business was to march straight across the desert for something like five miles, and not to fire a shot until we reached the enemy's works. We were to advance in two enormous lines, two deep, so that when we got to the intrenchments there should be no crowding of men at certain points. We needed plenty of elbow-room, and with such a formation this was possible, because of the great extent of the wall which rose from the desert, and over which we had to fight and climb to reach the camp.

There could be no possibility of confusing or misunderstanding our orders, because only two were to be given. The first, which was to be by word of mouth, and in whispers, was to fix bayonets, which would be just before we reached the trenches, and the other was to be a signal on the bugle to storm.

To me, as a young marine, the work was just as exciting and attractive as it could be. It was a change from ship life—and there was always the ambition among the Marines to do things rather better than anybody else. The spirit of rivalry counted for a good deal, seeing that every branch of the Navy and Army was represented, and that the Indian native forces had sent contingents. Fine fellows they were, too, especially the mounted troops, like the Bengal Lancers. The Marine Light Infantry, my own corps—I belonged to the Portsmouth Division—formed part of General Graham's brigade, which was a splendid body of picked cavalry, artillery, and infantry. There was no mistaking the Marines, for we were the only infantry in blue serge, all the other infantry wearing red—the colour associated with all the heaviest fighting in the British Army. That was before the days of khaki.

On the evening of the 12th we made completely ready at Kassassin for our desert march and battle. We were to leave behind the 50th West Kent Regiment to guard the lock—hard luck for them, in a way, as it proved, because they are the only corps that did not get the bar for Tel-el-Kebir. Each of us had a hundred rounds of ammunition and two days' rations, and the regimental transports had two more days' rations and thirty extra rounds per man. Our water-bottles were filled with cold tea, which some of us thought was poor stuff to fight on. I think so still.

We struck the tents where we had been camping, just as quietly and orderly as if we had been changing stations and were making ready to pitch them somewhere else. There was, however, that excitement which is always present when an army is getting ready for battle. It was particularly noticeable in this case, because many of the troops were quite young fellows, and not a few of the officers were mere lads. They were all eager to start and get to close quarters with the Gippies. We did not by any means expect a walk over, because the enemy had shown that he could make a very stubborn stand even against white troops.

Our last meal before the battle was eaten just as the swift darkness fell. I am sure that the spirits of not a few sank with the sun, because the solemn thought came that for some of us the sun had set for ever.

The night was fully with us, and everything was still and peaceful when we started on our stealthy march, high-strung and excited, knowing, even the rawest of us, that it would not be easy to keep ourselves under that

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perfect control which was essential for the success of the undertaking. You cannot enter on a task which makes a heavier call on your courage than such a march as this. Such vast results depend on such trifles—and who can tell what trifle in the darkness and the desert may bring about an army's doom?

We advanced a little way across the sand and gravel, finding it a desperate and trying business to keep in proper touch with each other and to maintain our formation. There was bound to be straggling to some extent, yet it is astonishing, considering the intense darkness and the excessive strain on everybody, that the army kept together as well as it did.

We had not gone far before a halt was ordered and we piled arms. There was still plenty of time before us, and it would be madness to hurl an exhausted army against Arabi's strong intrenchments.

At half-past one o'clock in the morning we were on the march again, and even the low, nervous laughs and subdued talk died away as we got nearer and nearer to the sleeping camp. When we first started there was something like a little freedom in the ranks, but this was soon rigidly suppressed, and we were forbidden to make a sound.

The officers of the Intelligence Department rode ahead, guiding us by compass, which, on such a dark night, was the only way, and it was a very difficult thing indeed to keep straight for the intrenchments.

Cannot you picture the terrific strain on those pilots, who knew how easily they could take 14,000 men several miles away from the spot which it was necessary to reach, and thus utterly destroy our leader's plans, prepared with so much anxious care?

Occasionally a short halt was made, so that the regiments could keep in proper touch with each other and maintain the formation of the advance.

To the north were the Cavalry and Horse Artillery; on the right was my own brigade—Graham's—with the Guards to support us; on the left was the Royal Artillery, and between it and the fresh water canal to the south was the Highland Brigade; in a truck on the railway, which ran past the camp parallel with the canal, was the Naval Brigade with a forty-pounder; and to the south of the canal was the Indian Brigade of Cavalry.

You will understand from this short description how minute and complete were our Chief's preparations. He was staking everything on a surprise attack with the bayonet—a swoop in the night on a vast, sleeping camp, a rousing and a routing, and then a crowning with the cavalry and artillery of the work which the infantry had begun.

There was nothing in the way of speech but hoarse, excited whispering in that overpowering darkness. Sometimes it would be a careless, jerky remark, accompanied by a snappy little laugh of nervousness—the kind of noise that people often make when they are afraid and ashamed to show their terror. At other times it would be a muttered order to the men to keep their mouths shut and preserve silence in the ranks. You could hear men talking in low tones to themselves, too, and sending, God knows, many a fond message to those distant homes which they might never see again.

You may try to laugh and jest as you will, but you can never overcome the deep solemnity of a silent desert march like that. You are awed into dumbness, and your very body seems to shrink into quietness. You are afraid to breathe, for fear you should raise some mysterious alarm which would let loose every muzzle that you know is facing you, ready to blaze, and blast and sweep you off the face of the desert.

The tension was terrible and unbearable—like that which overpowers many people during a dangerous thunderstorm, when, fascinated, they gaze at the black sky, watching for the vivid flash and waiting breathlessly for the thunder. So were we—piercing the darkness ahead, expecting every second to see the red bursts of light and to hear the booming of the guns.

The strain was almost at breaking point when an agitated voice whispered in my ear. We were marching on, crunching softly into the desert sand, and, in spite of all our care, tumbling into and colliding with each other.

"Bill!" I heard the voice whisper hoarsely.

"Hello!" I whispered back. "What do you want?"

It was my front-rank man who had turned suddenly in the darkness to address me.

"Bill," he answered hurriedly, "do you mind changing places with me? I've come over a bit queer." He had been suffering from dysentery for some time.

Now, as you know, it is against all orders to do a thing like that, especially when you are marching into action, and are almost on the enemy; but in battle many a place is changed, either by accident or design, and nobody is much the worse for it.

Well, I was young and dare-devil, and did not care a straw whether I was at the mouth

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of a gun or the breech, so I whispered back:

"All right, mate, I'll swop; but front or rear rank won't keep you from being shot, if it's your luck to get a bullet."

It was all done in a second or two. I just edged to the right and passed ahead into his place, and he slipped into mine, and for the time I thought no more about it.

Everything that a gallant general and brave, far-seeing officers had it in their power to do had been accomplished, so that our plan should be carried out. It seemed, indeed, as if we should be able to rush in with the bayonet and literally throw the enemy out of his intrenchments before he could recover from his amazement and confusion.

The crisis of our advance had come—the whispered orders to fix bayonets, and the last words of encouragement and exhortation had been uttered.

Then came one of the unexpected happenings of war.

The silence was broken by the crack of a single rifle in the intrenchments—a startling signal in the night, which showed that our presence was known. Concealment was useless now, and there was no need to sound the bugles for the storm.

With appalling suddenness the guns of the intrenchments crashed upon us, and there was a blaze of rifle fire in the darkness which showed up the enemy's defences, and revealed the figures of some of the artillerymen and infantry.

Everything was in favour of the Egyptians, and against ourselves. They were sheltered, and had only bullets and bayonets to reckon with; we were in the open desert, with the fire of the guns themselves to meet, and afterwards rifle and steel to overcome.

If the guns had been well aimed and served, if the rifle-fire had been properly directed and well maintained, few, if any, of the British troops could have reached the intrenchments. They would have been mown down by regiments, they would have melted as they advanced across the desert, for when we were discovered we were still about three hundred yards from the earthworks—and that space, short though it was, was enough for practical annihilation. But the guns had too much elevation, and the result was that when, in panic, they were fired at us, their shot and shell went overhead instead of through our ranks. Need I dwell on the havoc which even a single missile could have wrought, with nothing to stop its point-blank force but human bodies—or hint at the destruction which a discharge of grape-shot could have done? Very recently in the campaign one of our own shells had destroyed a dozen men in a cluster, and in another case nearly thirty dead were found in a heap, killed by gun-fire.

Officers and men amongst us were killed and wounded instantly, and were lying dead or dying on the sand which but a moment earlier they had been treading in the vigour of a splendid health. The gloomy fears of some at least had been fulfilled, and for them the sun would rise no more.

The perfect silence of the advance had been followed by the roar and turmoil of a fierce and bloodily contested action. Orders which had been whispered before were shouted now, and there was the loud, steely rattle of bayonets which were being plucked from their scabbards and fixed on to the rifles—the old three-cornered bayonets, and the fine Martinis which all fighting men loved and understood so well.

It was a furious rush towards the wall of fire across the desert, and a mad spring at the intrenchments. These were not much to speak of—earthworks about four feet deep and six feet wide. These were the trenches proper, which we had to pass; then there was a breastwork on the other side, which had been formed of the dirt and sand from the hollows of the intrenchments.

The dawn in Egypt seems to come as quickly as the daylight enters when you draw your blind at home. It is dark, then the sky flushes in the East, and before you can understand things, day is with you.

When we reached the trenches the blackness was vanishing, and the day itself gave us the fighting light which for a few minutes had been afforded by the gun-bursts and the rifle-spits.

I dashed along with my comrades, running and cheering, in a whirl of excitement and frenzy. Before I could realise what was happening, I was at the intrenchments, making ready to swarm up the low defence and get in amongst the Egyptians.

I looked up, and saw against the sky a white-clad Gippy with a short, brass-hilted sword. He must have been a bugler, for he had a bugle hanging from his shoulder. He was bending down, with the weapon ready for a cut or thrust. He was about four feet above me, fighting downward, and slashing at me savagely.

I drove my bayonet swiftly upward, and the weapon went through his chest. He tumbled down upon me as I drew it out, and

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My comrade shot one, and I bayoneted the other.

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we rolled to the ground together. I was on my feet instantly, twisted him over to the right, drew my bayonet out, and scrambled as hard as I could to join about a dozen of my comrades. I left the bugler where he fell, and I never knew whether he lived or died.

I do not suppose that anybody who was in that amazingly short and effective fight could give you a clear and connected idea of what really took place. It was all so swift, so bewildering, and yet there was such a clean and splendid sweep of everything. We had not been used to this sort of thing—you remember that at Kassassin we were fighting for many hours on end, and in other actions we had been led to know that the Gippy stood his ground and made a stiff, long fight for it.

At Tel-el-Kebir, protected as he was by his trenches, with immense supplies of food, stores, and ammunition, and everything in his favour, we believed that he would never turn tail until he had made us pay an awful price for our victory. Yet it was clear to a good many of us, as soon as we had swarmed over the earthworks and got in amongst the defenders, that they would not have much staying-power or stomach for the fight. It was a confused *mêlée*, a desperate jumble of opposing soldiers, and the pitting of cold steel against fire and sword. But, above all things, the Egyptians were demoralised and disheartened by the suddenness of our assault.

The greatest peril of all—the artillery fire—was soon put behind us, and we got to close quarters and hand-to-hand fighting, which was just what most of us were best fitted for and craving to do. After a long and desperate tension you need a special outlet for your energies, and in the intrenchments we got it.

Everybody was now firing wildly and anywhere, and British and Gippies were mixed up in what seemed like hopeless confusion. But the men on our side never forgot their task, which was to drive the dark men in white clothing out of the trenches and take or destroy as many as they could.

I was fighting near and with a married man named Sindin, who came from my own native place, Hastings. His rifle was loaded, but so far I had not had time to slip a cartridge into my own. I was too busy with the bayonet.

Already the Gippies were on the run; but many were at bay, and, like all cornered creatures, were dangerous to tackle. A couple were very near Sindin and me, and the four of us were together almost before we quite knew what was happening. My comrade sho one, and I bayoneted the other; then we rushed on and another Gippy fell to each of us.

I would like to pause for a moment here to say two things—one in praise of the gymnasium practice at home, and the other in praise of that service which, like a Red Marine, I reckon is the finest in the whole wide world. What would I not give to live my life afloat and ashore over again! It was my gymnasium training at home which stood me in such splendid stead, because I had now to rely entirely on steel, as I found it impossible to load. My breech-block was clogged with sand—choked, I suppose, when I fell into the trench with the Egyptian bugler.

I mention these personal incidents of the battle, not because I glory in them, but to show how savage the carnage was, and how it came about that, in a short space of time, we, who trusted almost entirely to the bayonet, accounted for a large number of the Egyptians. It was wonderful and terrible to see the way in which many of the assailants handled the defenders, and especially some of the Highlanders, who on that famous day distinguished themselves greatly.

The Cameron Highlanders did brilliantly. The regiment claims to have been the first in at the storming, and to have lost the first man in the battle on our side—a private who was killed by a bullet as he reached the top of an earthwork. Certainly Colonel Leith, commanding them, waved his sword and shouted "Come on, 79th!" and the men broke into double time and cheered as they charged. Their pipe-major, Grant, stirred their blood to boiling point by playing as they sprang forward the rousing strains of "The March of the Cameron Men," which is the regimental quickstep of the old 79th.

Before we could grasp what had happened, the first line of the defences was ours; but the worst was not over. There was a harder task to fulfil, and that was to get to the stronger fort which lay behind, and then to rush line after line of shelter trench until the enemy was fairly on the open desert and either captured or destroyed.

It was a time of wild confusion and fury, the ceaseless, savage plying of butt and bayonet, and the driving forth of a dispirited and panic-stricken horde. There was a hideous clamour—the shouts of the combatants, the rattle of musketry, the clash of steel, the crash of artillery, the cries of the wounded, and the despairing screams of the

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It was . terrible to watch the . . . Indian Cavalry pursuing and destroying fugitives.

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dying masses. And above all there arose that sound which you can never mistake—the skirl of pipes, for as soon as the Highlanders were in the trenches and on the tops, their bagpipes rose in wild strains and fired the kilted troops to great achievements.

Tel-el-Kebir was, like Inkerman, a soldiers' battle, and an infantryman's at that. When we had done our work with the bayonet the rest was left to the cavalry and artillery. It was marvellous to see the way in which the British gunners rushed their weapons over obstacles and swept the flying masses down, and terrible to watch the British and Indian cavalry pursuing and destroying the fugitives. There was no escape for them, and recognising this they surrendered and were made prisoners—and it was pleasanter work to take their bodies than their lives.

Cairo had been threatened, and it was feared that the beaten enemy, or at least that part of him which escaped from Tel-el-Kebir, might hurry on and take his revenge on a practically defenceless city. If he had any such hope or scheme both were shattered by the swiftness of the British cavalry movements. General Sir Drury Lowe, after finishing his work on and around the battlefield itself, took his brigade straight across the desert to Cairo, never stopping until he reached the city, fifty miles away, and insuring its safety. This is justly reckoned one of the finest cavalry performances on record. We ourselves gradually went to Cairo, where Arabi was a prisoner.

When the battle itself was over there was a rush to the canal to drink, and to slake that thirst which was the most dreadful part of the whole campaign. The water was thick and dark—filthy, in fact, and we knew it, but a desert thirst is splendid training for overcoming squeamishness.

We drank our fill, and then looked at the canal. Some of us instantly wished we had left that action unfulfilled, for the water, just a little higher up, was choked with the carcases of dead animals and the corpses of men.

When I returned to the battlefield I set to work to find out how my comrades had fared.

I made a strange discovery, and one that shows how curious is the luck of war.

The man with whom I had exchanged places—the front-rank man—had been shot in the left arm as he twisted it round to hold the scabbard while he drew his bayonet. The bullet struck him in such a way that the arm never set properly—it was always twisted and awry, just as if he were constantly holding his scabbard. He got a wound pension, so, you see, that exchange of places in the darkness on the desert was a nice bit of luck for him.

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POT-HOOKS.

Now Bertha goes to school, along with other little girls,
From her precocious lips the words of wisdom fall like pearls;
And you should see her face light up with triumph as she shows
The brand new copy-book or slate, where pot-hooks stand in rows.

Now Bertha goes to school, we've got to mind our "p's" and "q's,"
And listen most respectfully while she expounds *her* views;
But her favourite employment—recreation—what you please—
Consists in drawing pot-hooks very wobbly at the knees.

Though Bertha—now she goes to school—is always most particular
To point her toes and hold herself completely perpendicular,
I think the most affecting sight that I have seen of late
Is the vain attempt those pot-hooks make to keep each other straight.

Now Bertha goes to school, you'll hardly be surprised to learn
She's vanquished all the letters of the alphabet, in turn;
And even when she's in her bed and fast asleep, it seems
She keeps on drawing pot-hooks with her finger in her dreams!

Leonora Harris.

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THE KID

An After-Christmas Story.

By Owen Oliver.

Boxing Day is a pale echo of Christmas, but the day after is saltless, and one to sleep through if you can. Johnson Major and Johnson Minor couldn't; but they were only half awake at ten and wondering drowsily whether Mary would bring their breakfast up to them. Then a disturbing thought occurred to Minor, and he stopped grinning at the ceiling.

"I say, Major," he remarked with a kick in the back, "if we don't go down the Kid will!"

Major sat up suddenly and glared at his younger brother. He was thirteen and Minor was eleven.

"You ass!" he ejaculated. "Why didn't you wake me before? I expect she's down already. Get up!"

He shoved Minor unceremoniously on to the floor, and, as Minor grabbed him by the leg, he tumbled after him. Ordinarily this would have led to a duel with braces or knotted stockings, but both recognised that the situation was too serious for dissension. The Kid was a small person of felonious instincts, given to unlawful raids upon the property of her elder brothers, and capable of working great mischief in a short time.

"If she's touched my books—!" Major cried, in an awesome voice, as he put on his shirt.

"If she's broken any more of my soldiers —!" cried Minor in terrible tones, as he assumed his stockings.

"She's a perfect nuisance," Major pronounced. "I wish they'd send her away somewhere. She never lets anything alone and doesn't care a bit what you tell her."

"No," Minor agreed. "And if you just smack her they make a fuss about it." "They" were father and mother.

The boys dressed without the usual dispute as to whose clothes were whose, omitted the formality of washing, and rushed downstairs together. They elbowed each other through the breakfast-room door, expecting to find a small figure busy with a lapful of their property; but no small figure was there. The books were safely on the sideboard, and so were the soldiers and the rest of their Christmas presents. So also were the belongings of the Kid, including a leg of her new doll and half of its hair. She had taken the rest of it to bed the night before. So they ran along the passage and shouted through the kitchen slide for breakfast.

"Miss Phyllis?" said the housemaid when she brought the tray. "No. She hasn't been down, and isn't likely to be. She is very poorly, your mother says, and she's going to keep her upstairs; and you're not to make a noise."

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"Ugh!" growled Major. "She's had her breakfast in bed, of course. She always gets everything, the little beast! I bet there's nothing the matter with her."

"Did father give her anything?" Minor inquired. There were compensations, he knew, for illness.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Mary; "But I'll give *you* something if you don't let my apron alone."

Minor had untied the strings from her waist, and tied them to a chair, and when she moved she had pulled it over. She made a grab at him, but he escaped to the other side of the table and laughed till he could hardly stand. He had an innocent face, like a grown-up baby, and he laughed readily.

"He's sure to have given her something," he declared, when Mary had retired, breathing vengeance.

"We'll offer to go out and spend it for her," said Major, with his mouth full of ham. He had a financial instinct.

"She can't eat sweets if she's ill," Minor objected.

"*We* can!" said Major; and Minor grinned and waved his hands at his side. It was a way of his, and his father called him a young flapper.

They made a journey to the Kid's little room when they had finished breakfast; but mother had moved her into her own room, and guarded the door.

"Phyllis is very poorly, dears," she informed them; "too poorly to talk to you."

"We'll talk to her," Major volunteered; but mother said she was too poorly to be talked to, even.

"Have you put hot flannels on her?" asked Minor, whose ailments were usually digestive, and yielded to this treatment.

"She's too hot already." Mother shook her head and sighed.

"What's the matter with her?" demanded Major.

"I don't quite know."

"Doesn't father?"

"No—o. He says it's only 'pudding,' but——"

"She had three helpings on Christmas-day, and two yesterday," Minor stated. "I counted them."

"She didn't have nearly as much as you boys. She's very feverish and her head aches, and she keeps on moaning. I do hope it isn't pneumonia. Anyhow, I must stay with her, and you must run downstairs and play very quietly, like good boys."

A fencing match was the quietest game they could think of. So they made brown paper guards to two of father's walking sticks, and set to work. But Minor persisted in fighting after he had been killed, and cut Major's leg off while he stopped to remonstrate. This led to an argument which upset several chairs and the coal-scuttle, and Mary came in to tell them that they ought to be ashamed of themselves for making such a disturbance when "the little lamb" was ill.

"Little lamb," cried Major. "Whew! What did you call her yesterday when she put salt in the milk?"

"She isn't old enough to know any better," Mary stated. "It's no wonder if she's tiresome with two great boys always setting her on to do things—when you aren't teasing and tormenting her. You'll be sorry for it if anything happens to her."

"It's nothing to what she'd get if she was a boy and came to our school," said Minor. "Is it, Major?"

"Not if she cheeked the fellows like she cheeks us! And we don't hurt her. You said yourself she was the most worrying kid you ever came across. You know you did."

"I owe her one for yesterday," Minor observed. "I was only picking up the things she had thrown on the floor, and she pushed me right over; and mamma wouldn't let me pay her. I'll give her something next time."

"Don't be a cad," Major objected. "She doesn't know any better; and it serves you right for giving her the chance. You know how jolly artful she is. I bet she's only shamming. Little lamb, indeed! And blame it on us!"

"I don't say you're so bad to her, considering," Mary admitted. "And she *is* trying sometimes; but she hasn't much mischief in her now, and hardly speaks, and keeps on groaning. I shouldn't wonder if it *was* pneumonia, as the mistress says. It looks like it to *me;* and I ought to know, having had an uncle taken with it. A fine big man he was, and in the police; and the doctor said if he hadn't had any illness, he might have lived to be a hundred! So don't you make a noise, or do anything that you'll be sorry for afterwards."

"Do they look funny when they get new-moaning?" Minor inquired of his brother, when Mary had gone.

"It isn't new-moaning, it's pneumonia; and you can't spell it."

"I don't want to! Does it hurt?"

"Of course it does." Major looked along

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the sideboard thoughtfully. "You *were* an idiot to spill the gum."

"What do you want gum for?"

"To make a paper castle."

"For the Kid?"

"It would keep her from howling," Major explained. "It always worries mother."

Minor went and listened at the foot of the stairs.

"She isn't howling," he announced. "It's all right."

"That's all you know! They don't howl when they're *very* bad."

He examined his new books, and picked out one.

"It might keep her quiet," he remarked, and they proceeded upstairs together.

"Can't we come in and look at her?" they suggested, and mother let them in.

"The boys have come to see you, darling," she announced, stroking the hot little head.

"Hulloa, Phil," said Minor.

"Don't you make a noise, or do anything that you'll be sorry for afterwards."

"Like a book, Phillie?" Major asked.

Phyllis did not answer, only turned her head on the pillow and stared at them with her big, black eyes. They seemed to have grown bigger.

"She's awfully red," Minor pronounced critically. "I expect she'd like hot flannels."

The sufferer gave a feeble scream.

"No!" she objected. "Not want any f'annels."

"Now you've gone and started her," said Major scornfully. "You *are* an idiot. Look here, Phillie. See this picture? The man is trying to catch the bear. His name is Trapper Joe, and he killed two hundred Indians, and——"

"Don't like bear," Phyllis objected. "Nasty bear! Nasty Tapperjoe!" Then she began to cry.

"Ugh!" said Minor. "Now *you've* done it!"

"It's very kind of you, dear," mother said, "but she's too poorly to care about pictures or stories. I am going to send for the doctor as soon as Mary is ready. I do hope she won't be long."

"I'll go," Major offered.

"So will I," Minor added. So they both went.

The doctor was out, the servant said, but she would tell him as soon as he came in; and was it urgent?

"No," said Minor. "It's new-something New-groaning, isn't it, Major?"

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"Don't be a fool!" said Major. "It's pneumonia; and there's a 'p' in it, and don't you forget, when you write it on the slate; and tell him to look sharp!"

"Indeed!" said the girl. "Some people are sharper than they look, Master Impudence!"

"I should *hope you* are!" retorted Major.

Whereupon the girl seized a dusting broom, and they retired at a run, turning to wave their hands in derisive farewell. They pulled up at the toy and sweet shop from force of habit, and jingled the coins in their pockets, while they studied the windows.

"Three pence," Minor announced laconically.

"Five pence," Major stated.

They glanced at each other doubtfully.

"I believe the Kid *is* queer," Major remarked.

"She looked beastly red," Minor admitted. "I expect it hurts. If they'd put hot flannels on her——"

"You're a donkey."

"A donkey's brother is an ass!"

Major bristled for a moment; but his fighting instincts seemed depressed.

"Do you remember when we had the measles, Minor?"

"Beastly!" He nodded gravely. "There's one good thing about the Kid. She always gives you some of her sweets. She's not a greedy beast, like most youngsters."

"She's—funny," Major said; "and she makes you laugh, and you can teach her things. When I had the toothache she gave me one of her pennies. I wonder if they've got any toys for eightpence?"

"Let's go in and see," said Minor.

So they went in.

After some animated bargaining they obtained a ninepenny pencil-box at a penny discount, and carried it home in triumph.

"I'll give it to her," Major proposed, "because I paid most."

"No," his brother objected. "I let you buy it. I'll give it to her."

As they could not agree upon the point they referred it to mother; and she decided that they should hold one end each. So they presented it in this manner.

The Kid clutched the box eagerly, and hugged it up with her doll, but she would not let them open it to show her the contents, and fretted when they pointed out that she ought to thank them.

"She will thank you very much when she is well," mother assured them. "It is a beautiful box, and you are *such* kind boys. The boys bought it for you, Phillie, with their own money."

Phyllis made a little sound.

"She says 'Thank you, boys,'" mother declared; and they went slowly downstairs again.

"It's queasily when people are ill," said Major.

"If they die," said Minor, "it's beastlier."

"Shut up! Anyone would think you wanted her to. And I'd made up my mind she'd win the little sisters' race again this summer!"

He flattened his nose against a window pane and looked down the garden, where he had trained her so carefully for the contest. He seemed to see the Kid coming in first with her excited black eyes, and her black hair flying behind her. He held her hat, and told her to run straight for him; and when she had won he took her aside and instructed her how to bow when she went up for her prize; and she did it quite properly. She wasn't a bad sort of kid *really*, and if——if—!

Minor touched him on the arm.

"I say, man, I—I don't want her to. Let's go and ask cook what *she* thinks."

Cook dropped the potato she was peeling, and nearly jumped out of her chair at the suggestion of dying.

"Dying?" she cried. "Nonsense! Whatever put such an idea into your head?"

"Mary's uncle did," said Minor. "And she's *beastly* red. Hot flannels——"

"Hot fiddlesticks!" said Cook. "You're as bad as Mary with her uncles and nonsense. Don't you worry about it. She'll be all right to-morrow, and plaguing the life out of me. God bless her!" Cook wiped her eyes suddenly.

"Then what are you crying for?" Major demanded.

Cook looked at him severely.

"Whenever I'm peeling potatoes," she said, "it makes me think of peeling onions! That's why. You run off and keep quiet, and don't come worrying people that have got enough to do, goodness knows. I'll see what I can find for dessert after dinner."

"She's crying about it," said Major gloomily; "and I heard Mary snivel, I believe. Anyhow she'll have had the pencil box."

"And she'll think it was ninepence," added Minor, "because it's marked on the bottom."

They sat in the breakfast-room and read. Mother came downstairs for something and stroked their hair.

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"You are good boys," she told them. "And we all love our little Phillie, don't we?"

"She's all right," Major asserted gruffly.

"Not bad for a kid," Minor agreed. "Does she like the pencil box?"

"Very much."

"If she died——" But mother rushed out of the room, and Major threw his book at him.

"You *are* a fool!" he proclaimed.

After an interchange of compliments they settled down again to reading. Presently Major went out and listened on the stairs.

"She's blubbing," he announced. "Some kids blub for nothing, but *she* doesn't." Then he suddenly started, and took his cap and went out.

Minor poked the fire thoughtfully with his foot. It was an excellent fire, he considered, for heating things. He fetched one of his football jerseys, and warmed it till it singed. Then he rolled it up, with the warm part inwards, and raced upstairs and tapped at the door. When mother came he pushed the jersey into her arms.

"Put it on her!" he said. Then he ran away flapping his hands.

Major came back presently, hot with running, and *he* crept upstairs and tapped at the door, till mother answered.

"I found another penny in my coat," he whispered. "It was in the lining. It's to put in the pencil-box." He handed a tiny ruler to his mother and slid down the bannisters, with a brighter countenance. If the Kid died, he thought, her last hours would have been comforted.

The brothers were fairly cheerful at dinner, and until the doctor came. Then they grew solemn. The presence of the doctor seemed a guarantee of serious illness.

"I believe doctors kill people," Minor remarked suddenly. "Mr. Smith died after the doctor went there; and so did Uncle William."

"They don't kill people," Major contradicted. "It isn't allowed. Sometimes they hurt them. I remember when I was a little kid and put my fingers in the mangle, and he stuck messy stuff on them. Ugh! But I expect it made the tips grow again."

"That wasn't new-moaning," Minor pointed out. "I bet the doctor killed Mary's uncle. He's a jolly long time up there, isn't he?"

"Frightful. Some people say praying makes them better."

"She'll be all right to-morrow, and plaguing the life out of me."

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"Is it any good for new-moaning?"

"It *might* be."

They looked out of the window up at the sky, where prayers go to; looked very seriously.

"When I get a penny, I'll give it to you, Major," Minor offered. "Then it will be fourpence each."

"I don't want the penny."

"It's in the prayer. So I've got to."

"I'll get milk caramels—between us."

"Thanks!"

Minor looked up at the sky again. It was fair, he thought, to explain the transaction, that his brother should have due credit; and he had decided that he ought to mention the hot flannels. If the Recording Angel smiled I think he smiled very kindly.

At last the doctor came out of the sick room. They heard him talking to mother on the landing. Then he came downstairs; and the boys appeared before him in the hall,

"Is she going to die?" they demanded in one breath.

"Die?" said the doctor. "Not a bit of it. It's just a little—a little too much Christmas. She'll be as right as you to-morrow. Good-bye, old chaps!"

He hurried out of the front door, and Major looked at Minor and Minor looked at Major.

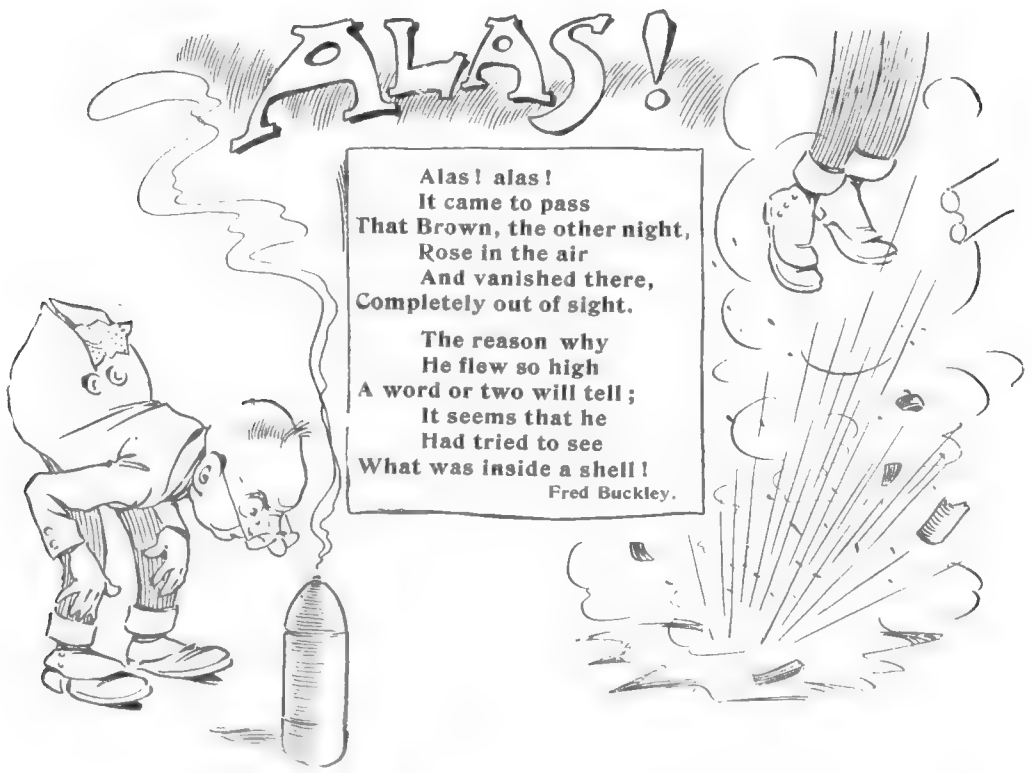
"Eightpence wasted!" Minor said solemnly.

Then he snatched his cap and ran out to call on a friend, and "have a rag." Several people turned round to look at him, and wondered why he was laughing as he ran. If they had asked him he couldn't have told them.

Major returned to the breakfast-room, and sat in the armchair with a book; but *he* was looking very serious. Presently he crept upstairs and sat down beside mother, and watched the Kid as she lay sleeping with the pencil-box in her arms. He thought of something that father said one night, when his little world seemed to have gone wrong, and his effort to have been wasted.

"Work is never wasted, old chap," father told him. "If it doesn't do what you wanted in the world, it does good *to you*. You will understand when you grow older."

"I'm growing older," he decided; "and when she's tiresome I shall remember that she's only a little Kid!"



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The Story of an Ingenious Jewel Robbery.

By Wm. Timms.

"Hotel du Prince, Rue St. Honoré," I shouted to the driver, as I handed my bride into a fiacre just outside the great Paris terminus; and away we went at a furious rate.

What desperate fellows those French drivers are, to be sure!

Our *cocher* urged his horse as if he were driving artillery into action on the field of battle rather than conveying a peaceful Briton and his bride to their honeymoon quarters in the Gay City.

We swung round the corners of the crowded streets and then tore like fury into the Place Vendôme, where, before we could realise the imminence of danger, we smashed into another vehicle that was coming in the opposite direction.

The impact was so violent that it hurled our portmanteau right out on to the pavement! My wife screamed, the drivers swore, and a crowd gathered round us in no time. The infuriated Jehus leapt from their seats amid a terrific bombardment of expletives, and rushed at one another quivering and gesticulating with rage. The excited crowd pressed forward eagerly to witness the impending battle, when, suddenly, to my disgust and disappointment, the disputants merely turned round and began peacefully to investigate the damage done to their respective vehicles amid the jeers and laughter of the onlookers.

Throughout all this bewildering confusion, however, there was one individual, and only one, who did not lose his nerve. It was not I. Far from it! It was a simple-looking gentleman in the crowd, who, in a moment of absent-mindedness, was calmly walking away with our portmanteau.

We resumed our journey as soon as I had rescued our luggage, and at last reached the Rue St. Honoré, where I scornfully tendered Jehu his exact fare and my hymeneal blessing, both of which he accepted with profound contempt as he callously crawled away round the corner.

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"Why, where's your scarf-pin?" my wife exclaimed, as we walked into the hotel.

I raised my hand to my necktie to feel for the pin. It was gone! And a wedding present, too! An 18-carat gold pin with two fine diamonds in it. It must have been stolen from me when I was pursuing our portmanteau just now through the crowd in the Place Vendôme.

I remembered how profusely the tall, thin gentleman had apologised when I explained that he had taken my valise in error, and it now occurred to me that, whilst he was returning the portmanteau, he must have taken my diamond scarf-pin in exchange for it. How very annoying it was to be robbed and shaken up like this just at the very commencement of our holiday! Still, it is a poor heart that never rejoices, and I was happy even in the midst of adversity, for it was our wedding-day.

The following morning was bright and clear, and by ten o'clock we were already in the Quai du Louvre, seated on the top of a tram bound for Versailles. There were only two other passengers on the top of the tram, men of the well-to-do bourgeois type. One of them was a portly personage, and the other a lean and somewhat melancholy man.

As soon as we had started on our journey my wife began to chat, while I explained our route to her, by means of a guide-book map spread over our knees. The French gentlemen were seated next to me—to the windward—and they also began to converse together.

At first they talked in an undertone, so that I did not notice their remarks particularly. Presently, however, just when we were passing the Trocadéro, I distinctly heard the stout man say: "Anyhow, the diamonds were worth having."

"Speak low," said his companion, as he turned and looked me searchingly in the face.

But I was already on my guard, and betrayed no sign of understanding their conversation or of recognising the melancholy individual as the thief who had stolen my diamond scarf-pin last night. My interest in our rascally neighbours was now keenly aroused, for the wind brought the following low-toned conversation easily to my ear:

"The police will search your rooms to-day," said the stout thief.

"Then they won't find anything," replied his companion.

"What did you do with them last night?"

"Dropped them into the post, *mon enfant*."

"How?"

"In a copy of the *Figaro*."

"Addressed to whom?"

"To Monsieur Louis Duprée, of Lyons, c.o. Restaurant du Palais, Sèvres."

"Well?"

"We shall lunch there presently, and you will ask the *garçon* to hand you any letters that may be waiting there for you."

"*Bon, mon enfant!*" exclaimed the stout individual, as he wiped his forehead and looked eagerly towards Sèvres, "*c'est très bon.*"

Then they lapsed into silence, while I turned over in my mind the gratuitous information they had unconsciously given me. It was evident that my diamonds awaited a claimant at the Restaurant du Palais at Sèvres, and it was equally evident that, if only I could forestall the thieves, I might, perhaps, be fortunate enough to recover my wedding present. But the enterprise would require caution as well as prompt action, and it was, first of all, of the utmost importance that they should have no need to fear my suspicion.

So, in order to convince them of my ignorance of their intentions, I turned to my portly French neighbour and artlessly inquired of him if he could speak English. But he only smiled in reply, shrugged his huge shoulders, raised his hat, shook his head, and did everything but say "Yes." Then, borrowing his newspaper in a pleasant manner, I wrote the word "Sèvres" upon it, and, pointing to it, requested him by dumb show to explain where Sèvres was situated.

"*Voilà, monsieur,*" said he, pointing to the town just a little way ahead of us, "*voilà!*"

I thanked him, in English, for his information, and began to make preparations to alight. As soon as we arrived at Sèvres the unsuspecting thieves descended, just as I anticipated they would, and my wife and I followed them down, and then, going to the edge of the pavement, we stood there for a minute or two in that undecided manner so peculiar to tourists.

From this point of vantage I cautiously watched the rogues as they proceeded towards their restaurant. Then, hurriedly explaining matters to my wife, I told her to approach the rascals quickly and request them to direct her to Ballincourt, a locality near Sèvres, while I went into the Restaurant du Palais and claimed my diamonds before they could have an opportunity of doing so.

The ruse worked splendidly.

My wife went boldly up to the thieves just as they had entered the restaurant and selected

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In spite of our driver's exertions, the two thieves were slowly gaining on us.

their table. She approached them naïvely, and, spreading her map on their table, leisurely wrote the word "Ballincourt." The Frenchmen seemed to be quite amused at her ingenuousness, and, good-naturedly leaving their seats, they conducted her out into the roadway and patiently pointed out the way to Ballincourt. Immediately their backs were turned, I walked straight up to the desk in the restaurant, and asked if a copy of the *Figaro* had been sent there for me—Monsieur Louis Duprée, of Lyons. The lady in attendance reached it down from the rack, and, with a trembling hand, I took it from her, and hurriedly returned to my wife.

"Come along, sharp," I told her, as I graciously raised my hat to the thieves, and away we walked rapidly from the Restaurant du Palais in the direction of Ballincourt. At the foot of the Pont de Sèvres a carriage was fortunately waiting for hire. We jumped into it, and directed the coachman to drive us to Paris as quickly as possible.

For several minutes we sped along unpursued, but just as we reached the Avenue de Versailles we noticed in the distance, behind us, a carriage that was gradually overtaking everything else upon the road. On it came, gradually gaining on us every minute. Anxiously I urged our driver forward. I had an important engagement, I told him, and promised him a five-franc *pourboire* if we should reach the Place de la Concorde by

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twelve o'clock. On we flew at a desperate rate, but, in spite of our driver's exertions, the two thieves were slowly gaining on us all the while. At last we passed the Trocadéro and entered the Cours la Reine, and, by this time, our pursuers were so near to us that they were able to shout to our driver to stop.

"Stop!" they shouted, "those English thieves have stolen our property."

Our coachman, hearing this accusation, turned and looked at us curiously for a moment; but I pretended to be rather amused at the incident, and then, after reminding him of my appointment and his *pourboire*, I suggested, in a casual way, that perhaps the gentlemen in the next carriage were *en fête*. For a few more minutes we continued to race along, and then, at last, just as we suddenly turned into the Place de la Concorde, the thieves overtook us and drew up at our side. Their presence, however, did not disconcert me now, for I felt perfectly safe from molestation at their hands in such a busy spot as this, where crowds of orderly people were moving to and fro in all directions.

To my surprise, however, the two thieves seemed to be equally satisfied with the situation, for, no sooner had they stepped from their carriage, than they approached us with the most respectful assurance. With agitated signs and gestures they endeavoured to explain that I had made a most terrible mistake!

"*Journal, Poste, Figaro!*" they shouted, and the people passing by began to stop and stare. The thieves continued this pantomime for some time until I began to be exasperated by their effrontery, and, being emboldened by the crowd, I at length produced the coveted *Figaro*, and whispered to the thin thief, in very good French:

"Monsieur, you perhaps remember stealing my diamond scarf-pin last night in the Place Vendôme? Well, when you were on the top of the tram this morning, I overheard you tell your confederate that, in order to evade the police, you had removed the diamonds and had posted them to Monsieur Louis Duprée, of Lyons, at the Restaurant du Palais, Sèvres. I am only an ordinary civilian, and I have the further disadvantage of being a foreigner. Therefore, you will understand, messieurs, that it affords me intense satisfaction to know that I have succeeded in outwitting a couple of rogues like you. The diamonds in this packet are mine, and if you make any further fuss about the matter I shall give you both into custody."

"Monsieur!" blandly replied the melancholy thief, "you are indeed most curiously mistaken." And then, as if his tolerance of my folly were exhausted, he added in an incisive and determined way: "Before I summon that gendarme, monsieur, and give you into custody for stealing my property, I should like to extend to you and your pretty wife the consideration due to foreigners. If you will have the kindness to step aside with us, just a few yards away from this crowd, I will prove to your entire satisfaction that the contents of that packet are not yours at all. They are my diamonds and are very valuable, and it would not be desirable to expose them to the gaze of the populace. Besides, I should prefer to spare you and madame a public exposure of your error. Do you agree?"

Of course I agreed; I could not possibly decline such a straightforward proposal. So we walked a little way in among the trees, while I carefully held the *Figaro* and kept the knaves at a safe distance from us.

"Ah, monsieur," said our portly companion, as we walked some distance in among the trees—"ah, monsieur, you have made a most curious blunder. My friend, Monsieur Gérard, is not the unpleasant individual whom you say he resembles. He is one of the wealthiest and most highly respected diamond merchants of Paris. Last night he took the wise, and by no means unusual, precaution of intrusting to the safety of the National Post a valuable packet of diamonds he wished to submit for my selection at Sèvres, rather than commit them to the questionable care of an assistant. Alas! my dear sir, in your eagerness you have jumped to a false conclusion, and have taken his property, thinking it to have been your own."

Of course I knew that all this was a mere "blind," and I quite expected that the thieves would try to snatch the *Figaro* from me if I gave them the slightest opportunity. So I stood at a reasonable distance from them while I proceeded to rip the wrapper from the journal.

"Oh, pray be careful," pleaded the thin rogue; "the blue packet inside is worth at least 20,000 francs, and I shall hold you responsible for its safety."

I really could not help laughing at his well-acted agitation while I carelessly threw away the wrapper and proceeded to unfold the *Figaro*. At last I came to a little blue-paper parcel which was carefully secreted within the folds of the newspaper, and there, in the

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quiet shade of the Champs Elysées, I cautiously and confidently opened the packet. It contained between thirty and forty of the most exquisite stones I have ever seen!

"Ah, monsieur, see what a great error you have made!" gasped the diamond merchant. "Oh, what anxiety you have occasioned us."

I was dumfounded! These diamonds were not mine. I had stolen them! The evidence of my guilt and of the Frenchmen's innocence lay there in my own hands. How suddenly the positions had been reversed! Five minutes ago I was proudly acting the part of a smart detective, and now, in the eyes of the law, I had proved myself to be a common thief. My motives for the theft were honourable, and, under the circumstances, justifiable, but how could I expect a foreign judge and jury to believe my statements in the face of such incriminating evidence?

I meekly returned the valuable jewels to the diamond merchant, I handed him my card, and apologised sincerely for my false accusations and mistaken raid, while my poor little wife wept through sheer fright.

Generosity! Ah, I shall never forget the free and full-hearted generosity of those French gentlemen. They accepted my apologies fervently and unreservedly. They shook hands with me, embraced me, and kissed me on both cheeks, and so very forgiving and enthusiastic were they that I began to fear that the fat gentleman would embrace my wife as well!

We shook hands again and again. We raised our hats and then once more embraced, and at last, with a sincere feeling of thankfulness and with a relieved and crestfallen air, I escorted my wife back again to the bright and busy Place de la Concorde.

Horror! What was that the newsvendors were shouting? I rushed into the road, bought a copy of *Le Petit Journal*, and read:

Last night the premises of Monsieur Eugène Fière, the diamond merchant of 16 Bis Rue St. Denis, were entered by burglars, who must have effected an entrance through the basement. After having selected the most valuable stones from the stock, the thieves were probably disturbed by M. Fière, who was an elderly gentleman. There were evidently two men engaged in the burglary, and one of them must have seized Mons. Fière from behind while the other struck him on the head with a jemmy or some other heavy instrument. The unfortunate merchant, when found this morning, had been dead several hours. The thieves left no clue, but the police have already searched the rooms of two men whom they suspect, and the arrest of the murderers is hourly expected.

They shook hands with me, embraced me, and kissed me on both cheeks.

And only two minutes ago these murderers had embraced me and forgiven me, while I had restored to them the stolen diamonds.

Yes, it must have been so! The absent-minded gentleman of the Place Vendôme was, as I thought at first, the thin Frenchman whom I had again met on the tram this morning. He merely took my scarf-pin last night as a passing trifle on his way towards the Rue St. Denis to join his friend in a premeditated burglary or perhaps murder.

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CAP AND BELLS

ROBBY WANTED SOME.

After dinner at the restaurant Robby noticed with bulging eyes the heaping pile of change which the waiter brought back to his father.

"Oh, papa!" he exclaimed, "I'd like a plate of that, too."

* * * * *

ANYTHING TO OBLIGE.

MR. GREATMAN: "I wish you'd stop printing my portrait every time any little thing happens to me, or else get a new one. You've had that old photo in seventeen times."

EDITOR: "All right, my dear sir. Anything to oblige."

ASSISTANT FOREMAN (a week late.): "I can't find that picture of Sam Buggins, the prize-fighter, anywhere."

FOREMAN: "Well, put in that old block of Mr. Greatman. It's not going to be used for him any more."

* * * * *

MARY ONCE MORE.

Mary had a little waist,
Where waists were meant to grow,
And everywhere the fashions went,
Her waist was sure to go.

* * * * *

USEFUL FOR HOUSEKEEPERS.

HOUSER: "I see that they are putting plates 18in. thick on cruisers."

MRS. HOUSER: "Let's get some of them. There's just the chance that the servants wouldn't be able to break them."

* * * * *

BY MOONLIGHT.

SHE (waxing sentimental): "What a beautiful thing is the soul, Algernon!"

HE (unromantic): "By Jove, yes, and if we're having soles for supper, let us hurry in to them, for it's chilly out here in the moonlight."

THE IRONY OF THINGS.

LITTLE BOY: "Isn't fathers queer?"

AUNTIE: "In what way?"

LITTLE BOY: "When a little boy does anything for his papa he doesn't get anyt ing, but if another man's boy does it he gets a penny."

* * * * *

SHE DIDN'T KNOW.

ETHEL: "So Arthur proposed last night?"

MAUD: "Yes."

ETHEL: "And did you accept him?"

MAUD: "I was so awfully excited I don't know whether I accepted him or not. If he comes to-night I did, and if he doesn't I didn't."

* * * * *

DISMISSING THE COOK.

The young husband was somewhat surprised when his wife came into the office. She opened the conversation at once.

"I want enough money to go out of town for a few days," she said, "and you will have to take your own meals in the city."

"Why, what does this mean?"

"It means just this. I got a messenger boy to come to the house for Bridget to tell her that she was wanted at her aunt's, and as soon as she was round the corner, I shut up the house and locked it and ran away. When she comes back she won't find anyone there. We don't owe her anything, so it's all right, and I wanted to discharge her; but you know I never would tell her to go, and I knew you wouldn't dare, and don't you think your little wife knows pretty well how to manage? Say yes, now, or I'll break down and cry here in the office."

I cannot say I love the sea.
Our captain was so rude to me:
He called me "Lubber"
"Saucy dog."
And other names before the crew;
Because when told to bring the log,
I said "Aye, aye, Sir,
will this do?"

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XMAS DONT'S.

Don't say, like Marjorie, who is glueing on her doll's best hair: "I know why Grandpa's hair comes off!" "Why?" "'Cos it isn't stuck on tight enough."

Don't play pantomimes at home and black the baby's face, or mother will not be pleased.

Don't tell your partner that she's a sweet, plump little partridge, or she will reply haughtily that she refuses to be made game of.

Don't go to a fancy dress ball as a bear, and then frighten a cabby out of his wits on a snowy night.

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QUITE REASONABLE.

Tadpole: "I hear you are building a new house."
Taper: "Yes, I couldn't very well build an old one, you know."

WHERE THE DIFFERENCE WAS.

SHE: "What's the difference between a dimple and a wrinkle?"

HE: "Oh, about thirty or forty years."

* * * * *

COOK'S REQUEST.

PAGE BOY: "I want two pounds of pork sausages, and cook says will you be so kind as to wrap them up in a newspaper containing a good love story."

* * * * *

OTHER SIGNS.

The great detective paused.

"The horseless carriage containing the murderer passed here just twenty minutes ago," he said.

The other man looked astonished.

"But I see no wheel tracks."

"No," said the great detective calmly, "but if you sniff a little you'll get the odour of the oil."

* * * * *

IT ALL HELPED.

CALLER: "Why do you play the piano constantly when your husband is busy at his literary work? Doesn't it annoy him?"

HOSTESS: "On the contrary; he insists upon my doing it. You see, he is engaged in writing a tragedy, and he wants something to make him savage."

* * * * *

GOT THE WRONG ONE.

CUSTOMER (to jeweller): "Here's the clock I bought of you the other day. It's of no earthly use to me, for it gains fully fifteen minutes an hour."

JEWELLER (examining the clock): "My dear sir, I beg a thousand pardons. This is one of our patent anticipatory timepieces, made exclusively for our billiard table and livery stable trade. Excuse the mistake. Anything you may select in the line of our ordinary clocks we will exchange it for with pleasure."

THE DIFFERENCE.

GENTLEMAN: "So you are looking for a square meal, eh?"

TRAMP: "No, I'm looking for a round one."

GENTLEMAN: "I never heard of such a thing. Pray, what is a round meal?"

TRAMP: "One that hasn't any end to it, sir."

* * * * *

WHY IT WAS SO CALLED.

"I don't see why they call fish brain food."

"Don't you? Why, it's because it keeps the eater studying to avoid the bones."

* * * * *

NO BREAKS.

A little boy had been sent to the dairy to get some eggs, and on his way back he dropped the basket containing them.

"How many did you break?" asked his mother.

"Oh, I didn't break any," he replied, "but the shells came off some of them."

* * * * *

A STRONG OBJECTION.

"I don't think my religion will be any obstacle to our union," he urged. "I am a spiritualist."

"I am afraid it will," she replied. "Papa is a teetotaler, you know."

* * * * *

TOMMY WON.

"How is your brother, Tommy?"

"Ill in bed, miss; he's hurt himself."

"How did he do that?"

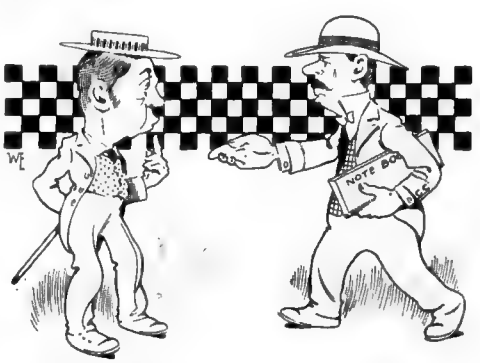
"We were playing at who could lean furthest out the window, and he won."

* * * * *

AMUSING THE BABY.

A few days ago two ladies, one of whom carried a baby, entered a carpet shop and signified their desire to look at some carpets. The shopman cheerfully showed roll after roll, until the perspiration literally streamed from every pore of his body. Finally one of the ladies asked the other if she did not think it was time to go.

"Not quite," was the answer of her companion, and then in an undertone she added: "Baby likes to see him roll them out, and it's not time to catch the train yet."



"Good-bye, old man. You may never see me again."
"What's the matter?"
"I've got to interview a man who has discovered a new explosive."

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THE FAITHFUL LOVER.

Her eyes, very likely, were blue,
  Or grey—or, quite possibly, brown;
But, though I'm not sure of their hue
  (As they shyly glanced up or looked down),
    In my heart I am true
    To the grey, brown or blue
Sweet eyes that I loved long ago,
      Heigho!
Though their actual shade I don't know.

Her hair was—well, golden or black
  (I'm ready to swear 'twasn't red),
And hanging in curls down her back,
  Or else twisted high on her head.
    Yes, golden or black,
    I'd declare on the rack,
Were the tresses I loved long ago,
      Heigho!
They were one or the other, I know.

What matters it whether her name
  Were Edith, or Ethel, or Kate?
'Tis memory only's to blame—
  So, with perfect conviction I state,
    Though I don't know her name,
    I am true all the same
To the maiden I once used to know,
      Heigho!
Quite a twelvemonth, at least, 'twas ago.

THE ONLY THING TO DO.

SHE: "Just think, Edgar, I ordered the dressmaker to make me a dress for the street, and she has sent me a travelling costume instead."

HE: "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

SHE: "All we can do is to take a trip abroad."

* * * * *

COWS AND FASHIONS.

"How savagely that cow looks at me."

"It's your red parasol, mum."

"Dear me! I knew it was a little out of fashion, but I didn't suppose a country cow would notice it."

* * * * *

ONLY THE BOTTLE.

IRATE CUSTOMER: "See here, young man, I bought this hair tonic from you, and it is absolutely worthless."

SHOPKEEPER: "We can't help that, sir."

IRATE CUSTOMER: "But you guaranteed each bottle."

SHOPKEEPER: "Exactly, sir, but we didn't guarantee the contents."

* * * * *

STILL THE HEART.

TOM: "He wanted to marry Miss Inherit, and declared that it was solely an affair of the heart."

JACK: "And when her father was financially ruined, what effect did it have on him?"

TOM: "Heart failure."

AS IT HAPPENED.

Miss Gayleigh: "I liked your sermon last Sunday against turning church into a millinery and dressmaker's exhibition, Mr. Sadleigh."

The Rev. Mr. Sadleigh (proudly): "So glad you share my views, Miss Gayleigh!"

Miss Gayleigh: "Yes; you see, it was such a 'facer' for Miss Gadby with her dazzling new 'rig-out.' My costumier disappointed me last week. But, thank goodness! it will be all right for next Sunday!"

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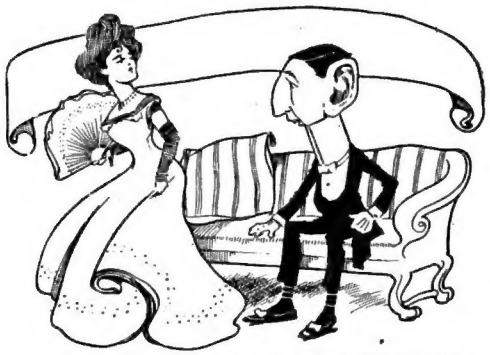

"You ought to have your ears boxed," said Miss Sharpleigh, to a fresh young man who had just stolen a kiss.

"Well," he asked, "why don't you do it?"

"I would," she replied, "if I had a box large enough!"

PUT TO THE TEST.

TRAVERS: "I want to ask you a question. Suppose that five years from now I should be walking the streets clothed literally in rags, wearing a battered old hat and shoes full of holes, would you think enough of me then to take me by the hand, buy me a new outfit, give me a bath, put five pounds in my hand, and send me away with your blessing?"

DASHER: "Why, of course I would. How absurd!"

TRAVERS: "Then, bring the scene a little nearer. Suppose that in four years from now you should see me as I have described myself, with this exception—that I had a good hat. Would you still do the square thing?"

DASHER: "Why, certainly! What——"

TRAVERS: "Make it still nearer. Call it three years, and I didn't need a bath. Throw off the blessing, and make it two years?"

DASHER (facetiously): "Make it a year, with a good pair of shoes—eh? Substitute a new suit, and"—(a great light dawning on him)—"oh——"

TRAVERS: "And if you are a man of your word, let me have five pounds."

* * * * *

DISOWNING A NEPHEW.

A proud young father telegraphed the news of his new responsibility to his brother in this fashion: "A handsome boy has come to my house and claims to be your nephew. We are doing our best to give him a proper welcome."

The brother, however, failed to see the point, and replied: "I have not got a nephew. The young man is an impostor."

* * * *

THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

Two scientists of the twenty-first century were examining with deep interest a petrified body which had just been discovered.

"It is quite old," said one.

"Yes," replied the other, "but not more than one hundred and fifty years, I should say. You will notice that it has the bicycle face and the telephone ear. Those peculiarities did not develop until near the close of the nineteenth century, according to the best authorities."

THE URCHIN'S WAIL.

A good and kind old gentleman
(The regulation type)
Observed a regulation child—
A weeping gutter-snipe.
"Why do you weep, my little man?"
Our friend, as usual, said.
"D'you mean to say you've lost your way?
Or are your parents dead?"
The regulation child turned up
His regulation eyes,
And viewed the kind old gentleman
With plausible surprise.
"Upon the twentieth of June,
Just nine short years agone——"
("The story of your life?" observed
The gentleman; "Go on!")
"Upon the twentieth of June,"
The child resumed with pain,
"I came into this evil world—
That date is here again.
And every time this day comes round
I shout with agony,
When I remember that my name
Is—*Diamond Jubilee!*
***Diamond Jubilee!*—Oh name**
At nine thou mak'st me shrink;
What thou wilt do at eighty-two
I hardly dare to think!
If it were only 'Jubilee,'
Or simply 'Diamond,'
It wouldn't be so bad; but *both!*—"
The gutter-urchin swooned.
That really kind old gentleman
Lamented with a tear:
"It's not a regulation case;
I cannot interfere."

* * * *

A SLIGHT OMISSION.

"Look here," exclaimed the angry man, as he rushed into the estate agent's office, "that ground I bought from you yesterday is thirty feet under water!"

"Pardon my oversight," apologised the gentlemanly agent, "we give a diving-suit with each plot. I will send yours to-day."

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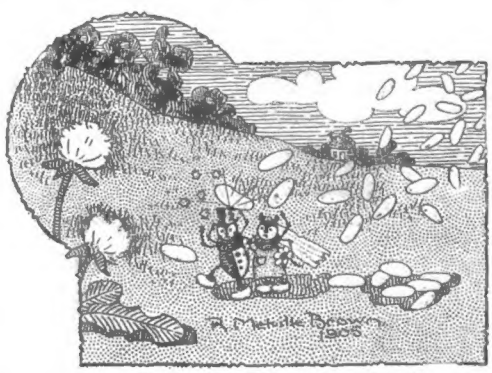

BITS FROM BEETLETOWN.

Hard Luck.

Bridegroom Beetle (irritably): "Why can't those silly creatures throw confetti? This rice is simply fearful. We shall be lucky if we don't get our heads broken!"

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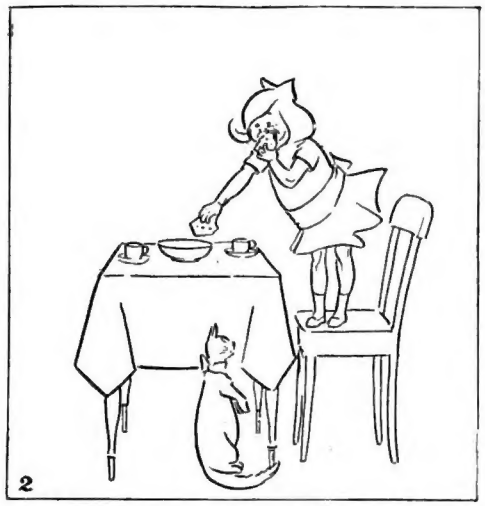
"THE CAT DID IT"—A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.



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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Good Wishes and Some Gossip.

1907 ALREADY!

How time flies! It seems but a short time ago that I wished you all prosperity for 1906—and here's 1906 an old man on his last feet. I hope those good wishes of mine took form, and that all of you did well during the past year. As for THE ROYAL, it never did better. I am happy to say that somehow or other we seem to have found a firm abiding place in the heart of the British public, and when once you have done that you are safe, for the British public, unlike the public of other nations, is very true to its favourites. Once it makes you its friend you are certain to remain its friend unless you do something very flagrant.

Well, let me repeat the good wishes of a year ago. May you all prosper greatly, and continue your friendship for THE ROYAL.

THE FUTURE OF LITERATURE.

Somebody said lately that in the far future magazines will be the only form of literature. Novels, essays, poetry, plays will all appear in magazine form. I cannot say whether or not this prophecy has anything in it; at any rate, the younger generation seem to be busily preparing themselves for the proud position of future editors. I have received lately quite an extraordinary number of private and school magazines, some printed, others typewritten, others again copied out in ordinary handwriting. The amateur editors want the opinion and criticism of a professional in their own line, and I am bound to say this: their magazines are, as a rule, very entertaining, especially when the contributors are most serious in their efforts.

One or two of these magazines are illustrated, very crudely as a general rule, but occasionally with considerable artistic skill; and, in one instance that I remember, so well, that I wrote to the editor and asked him to put me into communication with the artist. Imagine my astonishment when I learnt that the "boy who made the sketches" was the boy-editor's cousin, a well-known artist, whose work had often appeared in THE ROYAL.

LIBEL AND CIRCULATION.

Quite lately the editor of a certain school magazine wrote to me in great distress. His circulation, which in palmy days had reached the stupendous magnitude of three figures, had gradually dropped to less than twenty, and sheer ruin stared him with his magazine in the face unless something sensational should happen to draw his faithless readers back to him again. Could I suggest the "sensational something?"

I suggested a competition. "No earthly use, my dear sir," wrote the editor; "competitions are altogether out of date. I am surprised that an editor of your distinction should suggest such a hoary old notion. I got a much better idea from the editor of another London magazine. He told me to try to get up a libel action, and after consulting with my colleagues I have decided to publish a libellous statement concerning our Head which I trust will give us notoriety."

Whether this drastic method of bolstering up his circulation will prove a success I dare not prophesy. It may possibly have other and less happy effects than those the editor and his colleagues anticipate.

THE MODEL STORY.

You remember how I drew your attention in my October number to a story by Mr. C. Randolph Lichfield, entitled "Almost Snared," which appeared subsequently in the November ROYAL? I told all would-be writers to read it carefully, as it seemed to me more or less a model of how a story should be written. It seems that other editors are of the same opinion, for Mr. Lichfield writes to tell me that the story has brought him in several commissions. This is just as it should be, and if you write stories like "Almost Snared," editors will be only too pleased to accept them.

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